

Bandwagon

THE JOURNAL OF
THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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THIS MONTH'S COVER

In early June of this year, a Vermont couple made a fantastic discovery when siding was removed from their home as part of a renovation. Incredibly, underneath the wood were five posters from the Adam Forepaugh Circus' appearance in near-by Burlington on July 26, 1883. While a few other bill stands have been uncovered years after they were posted—ones from Pawnee Bill, and Backman and Tinch for example—none was as ancient or as well preserved as this Forepaugh find.

While photos of 19th century bill stands are numerous, the picture on this month's cover is the first ever to be captured by color photography, a stark and eerie testament to what it meant for the circus to come to town 108 years ago.

The amazing story of these posters, and the Shelburne Museum's conservation of them is detailed on pages 34 and 35 of this issue. Photo by Valerie Reich Hunt, Shelburne Museum.

CONTRIBUTION UPDATE

Secretary-Treasurer Dale Haynes reports that over 250 members included contributions to the CHS with their dues. This amazing munificence added over \$3,600 to the treasury, all of which will be used for the *Bandwagon*. Around 200 members paid \$20-43 in dues; 27 paid \$50; and 11 paid \$100. One exceedingly generous member

sent in \$500. Contributors were all sent a certificate of appreciation for their help in assuring the fiscal health of the organization.

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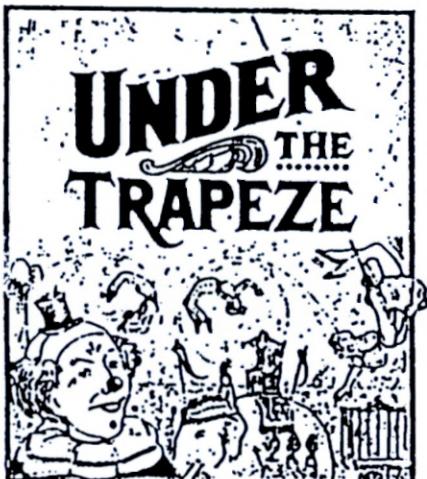


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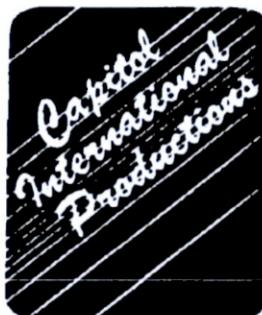
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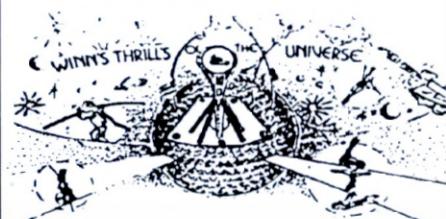
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The Carl Hagenbeck Circus toured on 30 cars in 1905 and 1906. The principal owners were John H. Havlin and Frank R. Tate. The 1906 season was not successful and the owners needed a way to bail themselves out. On December 4, 1906 Havlin and Tate signed a contract with the Ringling Bros., but the deal fell through when clear title to the Hagenbeck name could not be secured. On January 9, 1907 Benjamin Wallace, John O. Talbott and Jerry Mugivan formed a partnership with

Havlin and Tate. Havlin and Tate assigned the Hagenbeck show to the partnership and received half interest. Wallace and Talbott assigned the Great Wallace show and received half interest. Wallace agreed to sell the surplus properties of the partnership and divide the proceeds among the partners.

On January 19, 1907 a second agreement was drawn covering loans of \$30,000 from Wallace and \$15,000 from Mugivan to Havlin and Tate, secured by Havlin and Tate's interest in the partnership. When Havlin and Tate were unable to pay back the loan, Wallace and Mugivan bought the Hagenbeck show for the \$45,000 owed them. German wild animal dealer Carl Hagenbeck sued to keep his name from being used, but was unsuccessful.

The Carl Hagenbeck and Great Wallace Circus opened in the spring of 1907 on about forty-five cars. A number of cages and tableau wagons from the Hagenbeck show were used.

While the 1907 season was profitable, the 1908 season proved to be one of the most difficult tours of Ben Wallace's career with rain nearly every day during the first two months of the season, a flood, a blow down, and two train wrecks.

There is no record of the number of cars used by the show in 1908, but it was probably the same as in 1910 when it traveled on forty-five, using two advance, twelve stocks, one elephant, twenty-one flats and nine coaches. One of coaches was a dinner. The train traveled in three sections. The per-

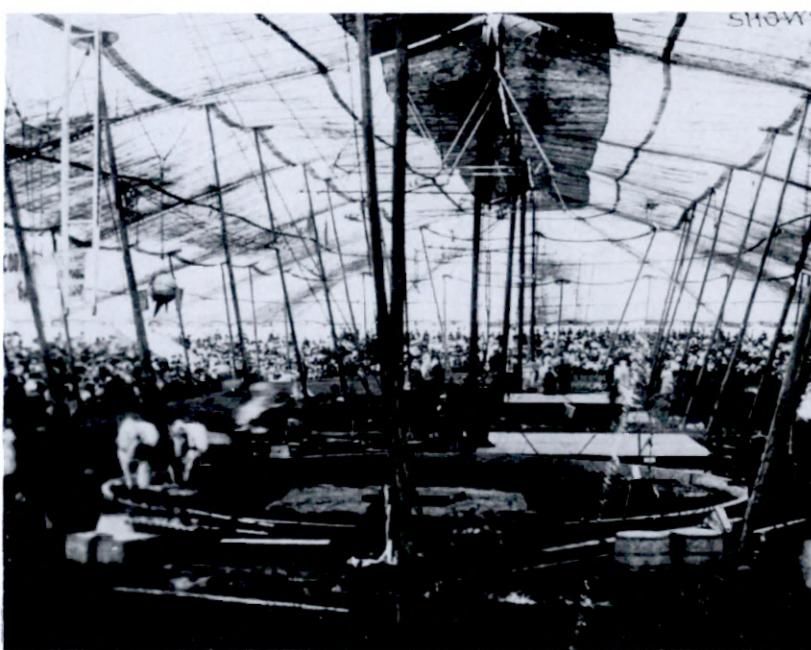
The Carl Hagenbeck and Great Wallace Circus The Difficult 1908 Season

BY FRED D. PFENING, JR.

formance was presented in a six pole big top containing three rings and two stages. A steel arena occupied the center ring during the early part of the performance.

The roster of the officials included B. E. Wallace, sole owner and general manager; Charles E. Cory, assistant manager; Bernard L. Wallace, treasurer; Frank Beaty, manager of tickets; C. H. Sweeney, equestrian director; Joe Leitchell, assistant equestrian director; John Hamilton, purchasing agent; Bert Cole, announcer; J. O. Talbott, legal adjuster; Wm. Oldknow, superintendent of canvas; Robert Abrams, superintendent of stock; Thos. During, superintendent of transportation; Harry Sells, boss property man; Prof. W. N. Merrick, musical director; W. E. Franklin, general agent; J. P. Fagan, railroad con-

Inside the six pole big top of the 1908 Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus. All illustrations are from the Pfening Archives.



tractor; Fred Wagoner and Fred A. Morgan, local contractors; A. B. Bennett and W. E. Haines, twenty-four-hour men; George Schofin, general opposition agent; Foster Burns, manager advance car No. 1; Dave Jarrett, manager advance car No. 2; W. F. Menefee, checker-up; Harry Earl, general press agent, and E. E. Meredith press agent back with the show. Most of these had been long time Wallace employees except for press agent Meredith who joined the show during the 1906 tour.

The May 2 opening in Peru, Indiana was covered in the May 9 *Billboard*: "The most confirmed pessimist on the subject 'hard times' should have been compelled to attend the opening performance of the Carl Hagenbeck and Great Wallace Shows Combined at Peru, Indiana on May 2, 1908. The weather, while clear and dazzling bright, was cold enough to call forth winter garments previously stowed away with misplaced confidence by the weather man and the calendar. But the only result of the sudden drop in temperature was startling combinations of winter and summer wearing apparel, white lace Merry Widows piled high with airy wistaria blossoms topping off fur coats with upturned collars. The customary circus crowd was in no way diminished, every train and interurban bringing in throngs of visitors in gala attire, while the streets were early lined with all manner of carriages and automobiles. The great tent was packed afternoon and evening with happy-faced people, who also patronized the very excellent vaudeville entertainment in the annex, and the concert as well.

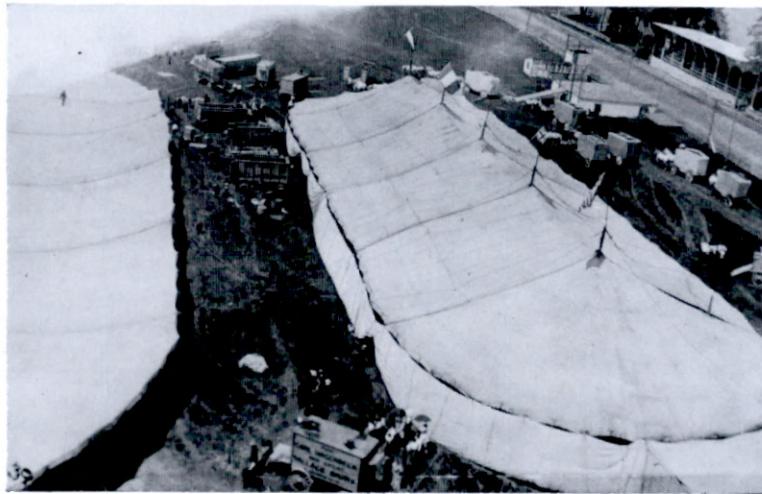
"The parade started from the circus grounds, less than half a mile from the center of the city, exactly on schedule time, and from the first appearance of the six lady riders in handsome military uniforms of royal blue and gold until that of the gay-hued, shrill-voiced calliope, the exclamation point, as it were, of the pageant, the universal comment was to the effect that the trappings exceeded in splendor and beauty of

any yet provided by Indiana's circus king Col. B. E. Wallace. No particular color scheme is followed, but the general effect is thoroughly good, speaking from the viewpoint of an artist. For instance one animal cage is done in ivory white, lightly lined with sepia, the carvings and wheels heavy with gold. Another larger cage is vermillion, touched with apple green, the panels and wheels shinny with aluminum. The great lion den is done in Du Barry rose and dull gold. The parade is longer than last season by five cages, four floats and a score of horsemen, and is further augmented by one band. The Japanese secured the banner for striking costume combinations for the entire day by wearing in parade their good American derbies with brilliant kimonos stiff with embroidered birds and flowers. Spring 'bunnies' and winter furs looked almost all right by comparison.

The matinee performance began with an introductory procession which completely filled the rings and hippodrome course, showing to advantage the splendid thoroughbred horses for which the Great Wallace shows were always famous.

The second display, entitled The Gathering of the Gallants, under the direction of John Helliot, kept the vast audience thrilled from start to finish, owing to the temper shown by one of the lions, which evidently considered being an actor beneath the dignity of a former monarch of the jungle. He entered the arena backwards, striking at the attendant who followed to close the gate, quarrelled with Helliot all through the performance, and wound up by attacking a tiger in the runway back to his cage. Trouble was only averted by the prompt action of the men in charge. The act lost nothing in interest and effectiveness by the protests or the disgruntled actor-lion because when the animals go through their work like so many cats or dogs no one realizes the magnitude of undertaking the daring and risk entailed.

This year's performance corrects the only fault that could possibly be found with the superb program of the season of 1907, in that the aerial features are second to none in both number and quality. In Display No. 3, the Delno Troupe and the Flying Meteors work together at op-



Aerial view of part of the Hagenbeck lot in 1908. Some of the white baggage wagons carried the Great Wallace title.

posite ends of the canvas, with just enough comedy to keep everyone amused, and so many daring and perilous poses an ovation followed the conclusion of the acts.

In Display No. 4, Winnie Sweeney and Lulu Davenport gave an exhibition of excellent bareback riding, while the Bedini Sisters created a genuine sensation by their graceful riding, personal beauty and clever dressing of the act. At this same time a large company of clowns make their first appearance, and without the slightest exaggeration furnished more genuine amusement than any similar company of merry-makers ever gathered together. Their work was as original, the burlesques as clever and timely—notably the Merry Widow Waltz by the Kennard Brothers—the impersonations so varied, that the most blasé laughed perforce.

The trained elephants, which have been one of the great features of the hippodrome throughout the winter worked to the best possible advantage under the direction of Reuben Castang and Percy Philips throughout Display No. 5.

The Bedini Family on Hagenbeck-Wallace in 1908.



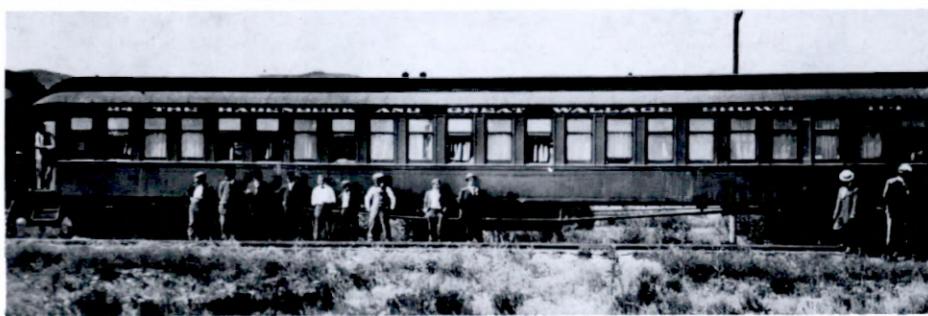
The Famous De Kocks, seen for the first time in this country present an acrobatic act, using two men, a boy and a large black dog, which made one of the distinct hits of the opening performance. The dog stands on the head of one of the men, and the boy then stands on the head of the dog, head to head.

The performing bears, directed by John Helliot, and the only trained zebras and zebrolas in the world, introduced by John Fuller, made up Display No. 9, with the artistic ladder perch act of Art and Dot Adair, and a double perch employed by a troupe of Japs.

"As mentioned earlier in this review, the aerial features are especially numerous and good, excellent work being done by Emma Donovan on the flying rings, and also by Cecile Fortuna. Anita Faber delighted as usual with her muscular exercise on the single trapeze, and Stella Miaco gave a very pretty performance along similar lines.

"In Display No. 10 Lulu Davenport and Reno McCree presented their bounding jockey act, which is without a peer for clever and fearless riding, while the celebrated Bedini Family, with Madame Bedini acting as ringmaster, gave a wonderful quadruple vaulting equestrian act, which finishes with one gentleman and two lady riders with the champion collie dog, Ulo, all riding one running horse. Last season the Les Rowlandes established a record that seemed impossible to excel, but the Bedinis, from the sensational parade entry to their equally sensational finish held every spectator spellbound. This act is no doubt the most gorgeously costumed before the public. Madame Bedini, performing her duties as ringmaster, seated upon a magnificent horse, in a great hat brave with nodding plumes in shaded blues, her elaborate gown, a daring blend of turquoise and Copenhagen blue, half revealed and half concealed by a white satin mantle embroidered in delicate tints of rose, makes a picture that is every way typical of the smartness and excellence of the entire Hagenbeck-Wallace organization.

"Display No. 11 comprises a group of contortionists dressed as lizards, frogs, clowns and artists, giving great variety in appearance and feats.



"In Display No. 12, the Borsini Troupe make their initial appearance in America. After many years of doing circuses and vaudevilles one feels that there is absolutely nothing new under the sun, but the Borsini Troupe present an of through novelty and interest, which was properly appreciated. They do remarkable acrobatic work on the uncertain foundation of rolling globes, which are controlled as easily as lesser performers would render the same feats on an immovable stage. Miss Kennard's work on the rolling globe won merited applause, while another performer along this same line of work was handicapped by being unfortunately placed flat on the ground. This little lady deserves mention on account of her pluck and perseverance in the face of failure caused by conditions the audience could not understand.

"Display No. 13 brought out Reno McCree and Miss Davenport in another excellent riding act, and also introduced the Thelaros Troupe, composed of a very pretty little lady in the smartest of pink gowns, a gentleman, four ponies, four dogs and one donkey. This is one of the new acts engaged by Mr. Cory while abroad last winter, and comes direct from the London Hippodrome, nothing like it ever being seen in this country before.

"Lovers of good horseflesh and good driving revelled in Display 14, Ida Miaco, John Fuller, Joe Leitchell and Grace Jenks appearing to advantage in the rings, while Mme. Bedini fascinated all beholders by her dashing personality, magnificent costume and perfect control of her fine horse in the ring vacated by the steel arena. Miss Connors, in a becoming habit of cream and black, and Anita Faber exhibited their thoroughbreds on the hippodrome track, showing all gaits in harness.

"In Display No. 15, The Three Corellis upheld their claims as America's greatest comedy acrobats, the one man making much capital of his peculiar physical qualifications, never failing to get a hearty laugh from the crowd.

"Another great feature act, the wonderful Van Diemans, in revolving teeth gymnastics, held over from last year and duplicating previous successes. This act

The dining car of the Hagenbeck-Wallace circus in 1908.

claims to be the acme of aerial achievement, and is deservedly featured, nothing else distracting attention from the merits of the tour ladies whose personal attractions added much to their performance.

"Display No. 17 concludes the first part of the performance with three mule riding acts, a comedy skating act, and the final appearance of the clowns.

"As to which is the particular feature of the Carl Hagenbeck and Great Wallace Shows Combined for the season of 1908, that will depend entirely upon the taste of the judges. The new foreign acts all created the most favorable comment imaginable, furnishing entirely new sensations and entertainments. Their diversity is not the least attractive characteristic, trained animals, acrobatic stunts, horsemanship, and then to the great wild animal acts and the excellent aerial work, and you have the sum total of a tremendous performance.

"The exciting contests of the royal Roman hippodrome which concludes the performance were up to the high standard maintained through the years. Mrs. Abrams manipulated the ribbons over her four horses in the Roman chariot race in the superb manner for which she is famous, and Miss Connors made her first appearance with great success in the Roman standing race, having had but six rehearsals before the opening performance.

"The side show differed from the usual annex of big circuses and the general superiority of the entertainment reflected great credit to Phil Ellsworth who is in charge of the annex this season. To the right on entering the different attractions were: Prof. Lowery's Sunflower Minstrels and Creole Belles; Victor Basil, the vegetable king; Mlle De Fogra, educated birds; Queen Sabr, ladder of swords, Grace Cortland, second sight; Nellie Ring, musical artist; Louise Excello, elastic Venus; Jessie Franks physical culture girl, Millie Lotto, snake enchantress; Lamar and Sadie, opium exposé; Prof. Horman, magician; Leech and Vance, wire artists and jugglers; Comus, punchenettes; the Thompsons, human targets; Dora Harris,

vocalist, and an oriental department in which the dance of Salome and the Seven Veils is given. Harry Cramer is assistant manager of this department, Charlie Mack, Fred Griffin, and Louis Smythe are ticket sellers and 'Slim' Rogers is the efficient boss canvas man.

"A fine band, under the skilled direction of W. N. Merrick, rendered a concert before each performance, using nothing but popular music, as a result everybody left the show grounds with ears ringing with 'whistly' melodies, and, as one girl put it, 'feeling like she had really been to a circus.' Classic music would have been the personal preference of the artists who make Prof. Merrick's circus band, but the people made no effort to conceal their pleasure in ragtime.

"Art Adair is engaged for still another season as principal clown, and more than makes good with all classes of people."

Following a Sunday run the show was in Marion, Indiana on May 4 for the second stand of the season. The Marion *Chronicle* carried this report on show day: "Last season Marion was the third stand of the Hagenbeck-Wallace combined shows. This season it is the second stand. From here the circus goes to Muncie, then Dayton and from that point to Columbus, Ohio.

"When the side show opened just after dinner today an episode occurred which might well shame some of the nature fakirs of the Dr. Long type. Latina, the snake enchantress, was putting her monster reptiles through their performance and when half a dozen snakes entwined around her body two of them became attracted by the hooks and eyes which held her dress together at the back. The snake charmer can not be charged with putting all she earns on her back as will be evident when it is stated that two sets of hooks and eyes held that portion of her gown which is above the waist. The snakes actually undid the hooks and if the side show manager had not happened along just when he did an 'undressing' act might have been given which is not on the program.

"Last season was suppose to be the farewell tour of 'Big George,' the world's largest hippopotamus, which proved such a great feature of the parade. Such an announcement was made by Col. B. E. Wallace, and his retirement was planned until about three weeks ago, when 'George' became almost unmanageable when other animals were taken to the temporary menagerie and 'George' left at the winter quarters. It was evident that the big hippo could not be satisfied off the road, so he is once more the center of attraction in the big zoo.

"Marion is in luck to get the big show while everything is new and bright.

"Although Saturday was a very cold day, Hagenbeck-Wallace opened the season of 1908 at Peru with crowded tents both afternoon and night. Many prominent visitors attended the initial performance, among them five members of the Chicago fire department. The circus plays Chicago two weeks in October under the auspices of the fire department.

"Few circus managers provide such fine sleeping accommodations for performers and attaches as Col. B. E. Wallace. A glance through the coaches this morning satisfied the reporter that circus life is not as hard as some people think—especially if one is fortunate enough to be with this show.

"A newspaper is published every week for the benefit of the circus people. It is called the *Stake and Chain News* and is edited by H. Dashington Crowley, who enjoys the reputation of being the greatest 'roster' who ever took his pen in hand.

"The cook house is one of the most interesting places on the show lot today. There are two dining rooms besides a kitchen and store house. The meat comes from Chicago and local bakers furnish seven hundred pounds of bread to James Davis, the caterer, this morning.

"At seven o'clock this morning the polar bears were given a cold bath at the corner of Third and Flinn Streets. As the cages passed a rest was taken, the sides of the cages were removed, a hose attached to the water main, and a five inch stream of water was played on the citizens of the frozen north for fifteen minutes. The bears seemed to enjoy their morning bath.

"In all the years that he has been coming to Marion, Col. Benjamin E. Wallace never had a show that pleased the people so well as the one appearing here Monday afternoon and evening. Colonel Wallace's reputation of securing new features of a high standard is sustained with this year's presentation.

"Saturday was the first stand of the circus after leaving the winter quarters at Peru, and there was a freshness and brightness about the show that may wear off before the season is ended.

"The costumes worn by the actors and actresses were newer than ever before. Everything about the show moved with dispatch and there was not a dull moment during the entire performance. The antics of the thirty clowns caused side-splitting laughs. One of the strangest features is the performance of the wild animals which are trained to do what appear to be impossible feats.

"Because of the disagreeable weather the attendance at night was not large, although it was even better than expected by Mr. Wallace. The crowd in the afternoon was large."

The other Marion newspaper had this

after notice on the show: "It might be just as well to lay it on the weather man and stop there, but Hagenbeck & Wallace, who gave two performances at the ball park yesterday really deserve better treatment, and that is the excuse for the story.

"It was the second stand of the season, and both men and animals were green. It was about as miserable a day as could be recollected, and there was another big attraction in Marion. It was a long way to the ball park, and the road was not at all dusty. The place was a new one, and the paths—well, they were simply pasty with Indiana sand in liquid form.

"But all this did not prevent a good many people from seeing Hagenbeck & Wallace, and there were few who regretted they braved the difficulties to see the show.

"Marion is a good town for circuses," said Colonel B. E. Wallace. "We always do well here. Considering the inclement weather I was really surprised at the crowds at the two performances."

"And the attraction, enhanced by bright new paint and brilliant costumes, fresh from the maker, was worth while. Hagenbeck & Wallace bid fair to meet the same success this year as in the past.

"A feature of the show which was not down on the program afforded great amusement to those who were seated near the third ring. A candy butcher had a basket in his arm which was loaded with popcorn, when a clown who was leaving the big tent ran into him, scattering the goodies right and left. Many of the sight-seers thought that the collision was played for their amusement, but when they saw the two men disputing a moment later it was seen that something had occurred which was not calculated to improve the temper of a clown on a rainy day."

The Muncie *Star* published this report the day after Hagenbeck's May 5 stand: "Many saw circus, despite downpour.

"The first circus day of the season has come and gone and in its path is an acknowledgement that the Great Hagenbeck-Wallace circus is one of the cleanest and brightest shows that ever spread their canvas in Muncie. There were two performances given and despite the exceedingly inclement weather there was a fair attendance at each show.



The Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus marquee in 1908.

"The show grounds were extremely muddy and in many cases the heavy wagons sunk into the soft earth to the hubs. The condition of the the grounds was not even considered by the great thundering throng assembled for one of the best under canvas performances that ever has been seen in the city.

"The feature of the show was the various trained animal stunts which brought great applause from the audience. The show is one of a few presenting a premier list of stirring, worth-while and absolutely novel performances by horses, lions, tigers, leopards, elephants and many other animals from faraway jungles."

The show played Dayton, Columbus and Zanesville, Ohio and was in Wheeling, West Virginia on May 11. On show day a Wheeling newspaper ran a three column drawing illustrating various acts in the show.

The *Wheeling Daily News* published this after notice on May 12: "The circus 'has came and it has went,' taking from our fair city much of the lucre of which Uncle Sam is the sole manufacturer, but no one regrets the money that was spent, so it makes no difference, since every one is happy.

"Two immense crowds turned out to see the Great Hagenbeck and Wallace shows combined yesterday afternoon and night and in the main they were not disappointed, the show being all that is billed and just a little more. There were none of the 'thrillers' billed by most circuses, but their absence was more than made up by the multitude of meritorious performances of other natures.

"One of the many things which make the Hagenbeck and Wallace shows especially pleasing to the spectator is the hustle with which everything is carried through. There are no tiresome waits while the paraphernalia is being shifted,

and there is something doing every minute of the time.

The feature of the entire production is the big steel arena in the center of the main tent, there the marvelous power of the animal trainer is exhibited as it has never been in this city before. Trained lions, tigers, leopards and other deizens of the jungle are put through a series of remarkable performances, which make one wonder at the command which the trainers have secured over the brutes.

"Among the features which might be mentioned especially is the wrestling match between one of the trainers and a huge polar bear, and the equestrian feats of a big Bengal tiger which rides a huge elephant around the arena, jumping through rings and performs other acts with all the skill of a human rider and the grace which only one of the big cats can show. In fact, the highly trained wild animals do everything possible, and the attention of the big crowd of spectators was turned principally to the steel arena while a performance was going on there.

"The show carries an unusual number of Japanese acrobats and high wire performers, one of the most popular features exhibited. All the troupes were good, and all attracted considerable attention.

"The equestrian feats which please so many patrons of the circus were very numerous and exceptionally good, and those who were fortunate enough to be seated near ring No. 3 saw a remarkable dog and pony feat, which was without doubt the best ever brought to Wheeling. The little trained fox terrier sat upright on a swiftly moving pony, turned flip-flops and did many other things equally as good.

"But it is the clown which especially delights the heart of the small boy, and the clowns were there in an unusual array, and, strange to say, the clowns carried by the Wallace show really succeeded in being funny. The clown Sousa band was the best stunt put on by funny fellows and was highly appreciated.

"Nothing need be said of the horses carried by Wallace, as this feature is always one of the best. Some of the most beautiful horses on the road are carried by this show, and, as stated, the riders are all of the best.

"Patrons of the side show among male contingent were deeply disappointed when the 'Dance of the Seven Veils' and

'Salome' were ordered stopped by the police, as this is said to have one of the 'raciest' features carried in any show. It received but short shrif however, and the men had to be content with gazing at the lady contortionist and the snake charmer.

"The industry which reaped the greatest benefit from the circus was the shining parlors, and many a pound garden real estate was scarped on this side of the steel bridge. The ground was spongy from the numerous rains of late, but the day was ideal for circus purposes, the show was what mattered a little mud."

After the circus played Washington, Pennsylvania on May 12 the Washington

of the season developed the fact that there never was a circus so well booked up for bad weather as the Carl Hagenbeck and Great Wallace Shows Combined. Although the combined shows battled with terrible weather for more than a week not a performance was missed and the doors opened on time both afternoon and night. The bosses in the different departments are the very best to be obtained, the men are efficient, the horses are the best ever carried by a tented enterprise and the loads are so well balanced and the trains so evenly loaded and everything so well arranged that difficulties which seem insurmountable to other shows never gave

Col. B. E. Wallace more than a moment's thought.

"The performance gets to running better and better. The foreign acts prove to be even a greater hit than Charles E. Cory had dared to hope. The Borsini Troupe, which perform feats on globes that have heretofore been loudly applauded when done on immovable stages is causing much talk at every stand visited. The Thaleros, with their liberty dogs and ponies, create the greatest enthusiasm at every performance and have been changed over to the center ring. The De Kochs startle

amusement seekers by the novelty of their performance.

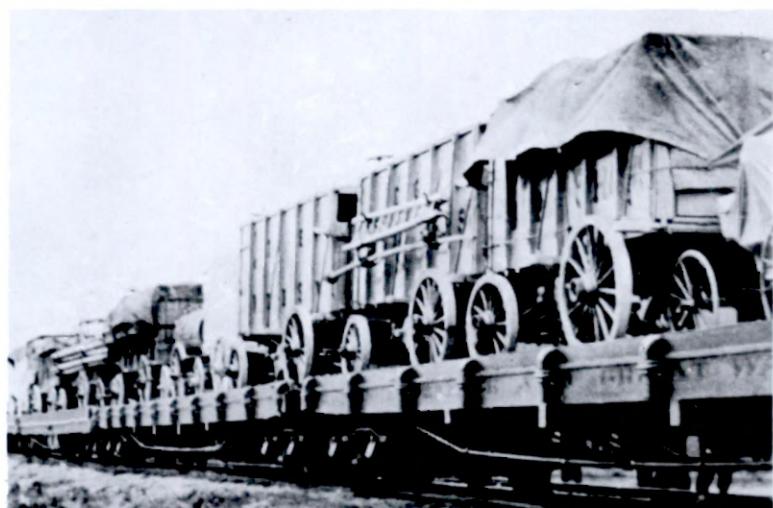
"Although another show had been seen at Washington, Pennsylvania it did not interfere with the Hagenbeck and Wallace crowd on May 12. Both afternoon and night the show had capacity. At Wheeling the day before people were turned away at both performances.

"The Ringling show was near the Hagenbeck and Wallace show recently and there was much handshaking among performers and attaches of the two shows."

This "Pepper" piece appeared again in the May 30 *Billboard*: "The Hagenbeck & Wallace show continues to do a big business and things are going along merrily. At Indiana, Pennsylvania the show ran into a baby cyclone which was followed by a very hard rain but the show went on just the same. The lot was so low that no attempt was made to show at night.

"At Johnstown this show was the second tented enterprise in and still another followed it at an early date. Opposition always proves an advantage to this show and Johnstown was no exception. It was a beautiful day and the big tent was found to be too small to accommodate the throng attracted at both the afternoon and night performances.

"John G. Robinson, of the 10 Big, paid



The white baggage wagons on these sixty foot wood flat cars carried the Great Wallace title in 1908.

Observer stated: "Two big crowds greeted the Hagenbeck and Wallace show yesterday and it was estimated that the circus played to 15,000 people on the day. The big tent was comfortably filled and the crowds compared favorably with those the circus had in Wheeling the day before.

"The performance measured up to the expectations of the people. The Hagenbeck trained wild beasts were exhibited in a steel arena which took the place of the middle ring during the first half of the performance. The acts were of the hair raising character.

"The circus features were fully up to the Wallace standard of the past. The Van Dieman's on 'The Devil's Wheel' represented angels and did wonderful feats while hanging by their teeth to an apparatus attached to the top most point of the tent. This act is one of the most daring ever seen here."

Press agent Meredith sent reports on the show to the *Billboard* from time to time using the non de plume Wallace Pepper. The first one appeared in the May 23 issue: "The bad weather at the opening

the Hagenbeck-Wallace show another visit at Johnstown on May 18.

"When the Ringling and Hagenbeck shows were close together around Pittsburgh many visits were exchanged by members of the two big troupes."

After thirteen stands in the Keystone state the show played Alliance, Wooster and Bucyrus, Ohio, then went to Illinois.

The June 13 *Billboard* carried this report on the show: "The Hagenbeck-Wallace Show played Racine, Wisconsin, June 2 under the auspices of the Elks. Governor Davidson, of that state, was in the throng which packed the big tent at night.

"At Milwaukee the show made a two days' stand to nice business and performers and working men appreciated the rest.

"At Bucyrus, Ohio on May 30 the show was in a flood but came out without loss excepting half a dozen stakes. The lot was near the Sandusky River and the stream rose ten feet within a short time, caused by a cloudburst at Upper Sandusky. The last wagons were hauled off the lot with the water up to the beds.

"The 316 mile run from Bucyrus to Waukegan was made in twelve hours and 'Dutch' During, the trainmaster, is coming into many compliments as a result. Other remarkable runs have been made recently and it is common for the big top to be up and everything ready by 10:30."

Press agent Meredith's *Billboard* blurb failed to report the complete story on the Bucyrus date. The Bucyrus *Forum* published an extensive article on May 30 about the circus problems in that city: "Show grounds flooded, no performance given—show loaded up and sent to Illinois.

"The heavy rains of the past few days caused the Sandusky River to go on a rampage and the show grounds became a sea of raging waters shortly after noon. Thousands of people who had come to the city to attend the performances and those residing in the city were very much disappointed as it was impossible for the show to give a performance in four feet of rushing water. The wagons, which were standing in water up to the hubs and many deeper than that, were quickly taken to the cars and loaded as fast as possible.

"The animals were also rescued from the rushing waters and taken to the cars and loaded. The big tents were torn down as rapidly as possible and packed in the wagons and carted to the train. Actors and others in the employ of the show combined in rescuing the property which threatened to wash away all of the materials belonging to the show.

"When the show landed here today the water was up to within twenty feet of the



The Bucyrus, Ohio lot under water on May 30, 1908.

dressing tents. When the show people returned to the grounds after the parade the water had reached the tents and the water was still rising at a rapid rate. It was thought by the management that the river would soon recede and the afternoon show could be given.

"Such was not the case and the result was that the water was so high that materials which were not staked to the ground began to swim and all haste and effort was put forth by the showmen to save it. Nearly all of the fine costumes belonging to the showmen and women were ruined by the water.

"As soon as the shows are loaded the trains will leave for Waukegan, Illinois where they will show Monday."

The newspapers along the route made note of the grifters carried by the show.

The Wausau, Wisconsin *Pilot* published this article the day after the show played that city on June 17: "The Hagenbeck-Wallace circus has come and gone—likewise the skin game and short change artists. The circus showed on the Johnson

Pulling the wagons off the water covered lot in Bucyrus, Ohio.



addition grounds yesterday and at the after noon performance there was a large attendance. Most of the features advertised were pulled off and the performance was up to that of the average circus. Some were better than has been seen here in a long time, the most worthy of mention being the trapeze work. Of course the trained animal part came in for its share of attention and were exceedingly good. The concern eliminated the old time spring board tumbling acts, which had come to be recognized in the same class as are the hippodrome races. One commendable feature of the management was that there was very little lemonade and peanut selling going on in the seats. The venders done their crying at the foot of the rows of seats.

"The menagerie was up to the average and contained some very fine specimens of the animal kingdom. The circus carries fourteen elephants, all trained, but it is the first large circus to visit this city having no camels or dromedaries.

"The circus employees while in the city were orderly and no robberies of houses were reported. But the show carries with it a bunch of grafters which is not a credit to any show management. Skin games were worked in the menagerie and side show tents and a great many soft ones

lost sums ranging from \$1 to \$5. Several parties living in this city who should have known better went up against these games, enticed by a crowd of cappers and pluggers. Short change men, too, were in evidence and a number of people got caught on an old threadbare game.

"While the main circus tent is a very large one, still fully two-thirds of the seats are reserved at 50 cents a throw, and reserved seat and program barkers worked a slick game on the people. If the circus management don't die rich it will be because the patrons of the game will get wise in time."

The *Billboard* of June 20 contained further ramblings from Wallace Pepper: "The Hagenbeck-Wallace tour of the upper peninsula of Michigan was a succession of big houses, although weather conditions were far from favorable. At Calumet it rained all day and at night it was almost a blizzard. In spite of this there was big attendance at both performances, and the day proved one of the banner ones of the present season.

The outlook in the morning was really discouraging. It looked like rain all day and the lot was a new park which had recently been graded. To make it comfortable for patrons, Mr. Wallace bought twenty loads of slabs and as many loads of sawdust in addition to bale after bale of straw. To be inside the tent comfortable one could scarcely realize the blizzard was in full sway on the outside. At Hancock the next day the weather remained cool, but there were only occasional showers. The people turned out with overcoats and enjoyed the show. At Marquette, the next day, the sun was shining, but it was still cold. Business fell below the two preceding towns, but was good. At Ishpeming business was also fair. The new grand stand was erected for the first time at this point."

The Hagenbeck circus played Duluth, Minnesota on June 22. Just prior to matinee time the big top blew down. A Duluth newspaper reported: "A heavy gust of wind which struck the rain soaked canvas caused the main show tent of the Hagenbeck-Wallace circus to collapse, about 2 o'clock yesterday afternoon, injuring a number of people. About a thousand spectators were in the tent when it went down, but most of them escaped under the seats, thence out into the open.

The first warning the people inside had of their danger, was when the tent began to sway. It seemed to jump into the air and then settle down again. The one section came down but not before the

people had time to run for cover. The crowds in the other parts of the tent were making their way out as fast as possible. By the time the entire structure was down, most of the people had crowded out underneath.

"As soon as it was found that everyone was out a large corps of canvasmen and other employees was put to work re-erecting the tent. When the side wall was up the afternoon performance was put on. The big top was up in time for the evening performance."

Tom North visited the Hagenbeck



The Carl Hagenbeck bandwagon pulled by a six horse team in a 1908 Hagenbeck-Wallace parade.

show in Albert Lea, Minnesota on June 26 and sent this report to the *Show World*: "I visited the Carl Hagenbeck and Great Wallace Shows combined at Albert Lea, Minnesota recently and found 'the most colossal circus alliance' to well uphold its assertions. Great show. The hospitality afforded me I assure you I am proud of and shall endeavor to reciprocate to the best of my ability by telling you what I saw and what is to be seen, although I can assure you it is a Herculean task even for a far more experienced lad than I am, but I shall do my best. Under the careful and obliging tutelage of E. E. Meredith (he of 'Missouri Breeze' and many other panics), I went the rounds. The excellent concert band under the capable direction of W. N. Merrick certainly places one in the right mood by their splendid before the performance concert to thoroughly enjoy the magnificent performance that follows. What a Beau Brummell equestrian director Charles Sweeney is and how well he thoroughly understands his business. The first display is a brilliant introductory. A kaleidoscopic panorama of regal magnificence completely filling the rings, stages and immense hippodrome course.

"The Gathering of the Gallants,' demonstrating to the highest degree the wonderful possibilities of the animal trainer's

art and evidencing the right of Carl Hagenbeck to be proclaimed 'King of the Animal Kingdom.' The animals presented in this group are lions and lionesses, tigers and tigresses, pumas, leopards, polar bears and German boar hounds. This marvelous performance is under the direction of John Helliot, a past master in the art of handling ferocious beasts and a perfect model of what an animal training should be.

"Display No. 3: The Delino Troupe in astonishing aerial sensations, showing the nicest of judgment allied with wonderful agility, the Flying Meteors in daring exhibitions of physical feats in mid-air.

"Display No. 4: Champion principal bareback equestrian act, Miss Lulu Davenport, dashing and bewitching principal bareback riding; Miss Winnie Sweeney; another contingent of Merry Andrews Harlequins and modern cutups in crazy conceptions and conceits, another Hagenbeck triumph. An African lion and leopard in equestrian stunts that make humans look to their laurels,

presented by Reuben Castang and Chas. Judge; an assemblage of creations by caretakers in original and mirth provoking stunts; double equestrienne exhibition of difficult and intricate exploits on the bare backs of swiftly running horses by Flora Bedini and Olga Reed.

"Display No. 5: Ring No. 1, herd of elephants in new and novel feats of many kinds introduced by Percy Philips, Ring No. 2 marvelous display of brute intelligence by elephant, pony boar hound and monkey, performed by C. H. Sweeney; steel arena, first of the world-famed trained wild beasts presenting a Bengal tiger in singular and remarkable equestrian feats in conjunction with an Asian elephant introduced by Phil Castang; Ring No. 3; Second herd of elephants wonderfully trained to execute clever performances. Introduced by Reuben Castang.

"Display No. 6: A topical song of the times by Lon Moore and Fred Jenks, assisted by their merry associates.

"Display No. 7: Ring No. 1: Risley act by two of the great Japanese troupes Kamekicho and Kanko; Ring No. 2: An illustration of the finding of really new features. A three high acrobatic act by two men and a dog. A combination of skill and animal sagacity unknown in acrobatic exploits, the famous Kochs; Stage No. 1: The Tasmanian Troupe, the world's undisputed premier acrobats performing in evening dress. A marvelous act; Ring No. 3: Japs in a big tub on Kobageshie stage.

"Display No. 8: Ring No. 1: Characteristic, and intensely interesting exploits on the ladder perch, Art and Dot Adair; Stage No. 1: Double perch, Hotura and Wawara; steel arena, a septette of Polar bears in sensational and ludicrous performances that surpassath understanding. Directed by the wonder, John Helliot. Ring No. 3: The only trained zebras and zebrulas in the world, introduced by Mr. John Fuller.

"Display No. 9: Flying Spanish rings, Cecila Fertuna; muscular exercise on single trapeze, Arita Faber; graceful and difficult feats on flying rings, Miss Emma Donovan; an artistic performance on single trapeze, Stella Miaco; Japanese slide rope, Sicheku; Japanese slide rope. Okabe Sacha.

"Display No. 10: Ring No. 1: Bounding jockeys in consecutive achievements, Reno McCree and Lulu Davenport; hippodrome track; clowns to the right, clowns to the left, clowns everywhere; feature display, wonderful quadruple somersaulting equestrian act by the Bedini Family and their champion Collie dog. Really a most remarkable exhibition.

"Display No. 11: Contortion feats by Stella Miaco, Mat Sumoto, the Great Dracula; expert hand and arm strength, by the De Kochs; flexibility by Ida Miaco; juggling by Hashimoto and the most remarkable double contortion act I ever had pleasure of witnessing by Russell and Da Verne. This act demands special mention.

"Display No. 12: Another act that demands special mention, that of the Borsini Troupe performing seemingly impossible feats upon tricky rolling globes, a great act; Millie Kennard on rolling globe; high wire Jap act, Keshi.

"Display No. 13: The great Bedini Family in unequalled equestrianism ably directed and prettily so too by Mrs. Bedini; performances on unbridled horses by Reno McCree and Lulu Davenport.

"Display No 14: All sorts of high school riding by Ida Miaco, John Fuller, Miss Conners, Anita Faber, the Thalens, Mrs. Bedini, Carrie Norenburg. Art and Dot Adair, Joe Litchel and Grace Jenks. Special mention is due Miss Anita Faber for her winsomeness as well as cleverness during this display. Certainly very bewitching.

"Display No. 15: The great big de-servedly so feature, the greatest of tented exhibits; The wonderful Van Diemulns and the Devil's wheel in revolving wheel teeth gymnastics. The acme of aerial achievement and a most marvelously bewildering, amazingly beautiful, cap-

sheaf of daring act one would ever care to witness. Words fail to express all credit due this act.

"Display No. 16: The Three Corellis in comedy acrobatics, Plamondos and Amondo, revolving ladder; Kennard Bros. in comical acrobatics; Kelly Bros, revolving ladder.

"Display No. 17: Everett Hart and Joe Litchel in comical antics on fiery mules; Delmont and Co., comedy skating act, (clowns galore); crazy riding on a crazy mule, Shorty Maynard; conclave of crazy clowns. Then comes the exciting contests of Royal Roman Hippodrome. Every horse a thoroughbred. Every rider a dare-devil. Then the grand concert after the circus performance; then the comedy bottles of Clem Murphy's.

"Over to the immense mess tent I was then taken, enjoyed supper on the lot, all the delicacies of the season, became acquainted with most everybody with the show and with Bert Coles' announcement that the Gentry Shows, 'the greatest dog and pony shows on earth,' would follow the Wallace-Hagenbeck shows in Albert Lea in three days still ringing in my ears, my mind still in a whirl over the multitudinous magnificence of the shows and the exceptional care taken of me by E. E. Meredith, I hired myself back to my hotel and now I have tried to tell you just what the great Hagenbeck-Wallace shows consist of and trust my efforts to do so meet your demands. Summed up it's a marvelous show, a grand show and a great show."

The June 27 *Billboard* reported that the show had run into opposition at Duluth, Minnesota on June 22, suggesting that the show had done better where there was opposition. The prior ten stands where there were no other shows had only been fair to fine. Only two of them had given the show capacity. All of the afternoons had been good but the nights had brought only medium attendance.

Tony De Kochs had been knocked off a

Hagenbeck-Wallace on the lot in Lexington, Missouri on August 8, 1908.



parade wagon by an electric wire in Green Bay, Wisconsin on June 16 but received only slight injuries.

Meredith published this report in the July 11 *Billboard* regarding a wreck in St. Paul, Minnesota: "A freight train crashed into the second section of the Hagenbeck and Wallace show train at St. Paul, early in the morning of June 25, and it was very fortunate that there was no loss of life. As it was, several of the men in the bosses' end of sleeping car No. 22 were slightly injured, and three were left in a hospital in that city.

"The train was standing at a point where two tracks crossed. A heavy freight, which was also in the block, came tearing down the incline. The engineer of the show train saw the freight coming, and realized that a collision could not be averted. As his train was standing the oncoming engine would strike the sleepers. To avoid he backed his train until two flat cars were in advance of sleeper No. 22.

"The flats stood the brunt of the collision. The band wagon and several of the cook house wagons were on these flats and were totally demolished. The sleeper was lifted off its trucks and on to the flat car, but fortunately it did not overturn. The bosses' end of the car was smashed in, and how the men escaped death can not be figured out.

"The injured are: George Davis, superintendent of the No. 2 dining room, taken to a hospital at St. Paul. John McKenzie, a camp fire man, and E. F. Sutton, a greaser, were also taken to the hospital. Lee Craig, boss canvasman, was slightly injured. Tom Dunn, master chandelier man, was slightly injured as was Charlie Young, first assistant boss canvasman.

"The circus men were thrown from their bunks in a promiscuous heap. To add to the awfulness, a fire broke out and the St. Paul fire department had to be called out. The fire was quickly extinguished and the firemen and police lent a hand in the work of rescue. As quickly as possible the three most badly injured were removed to a hospital.

"By six o'clock in the morning the wreck was cleared away, and the show arrived at Mankato at noon. Although the cook house wagons were completely demolished, dinner was served on the lot at four o'clock.

"Only one performance was missed as a result of the wreck. At night the show went on at Mankato as though nothing had happened."

The *Mankato Daily Free Press* published this account of the St. Paul wreck on June

25: "Somewhat disfigured but still able to be in the ring the Hagenbeck-Wallace reached Mankato by noon today, after having passed through a wreck at St. Paul shortly after midnight.

The accident occurred at the foot of Chestnut Street. The circus train was crashed into by a St. Paul freight train. Eight persons were seriously injured. Twenty others of the circus crew limped out of the coaches slightly bruised and scratched.

"There were over a hundred men packed in the two coaches of the circus train and the cook wagon, and it was miraculous that none was killed.

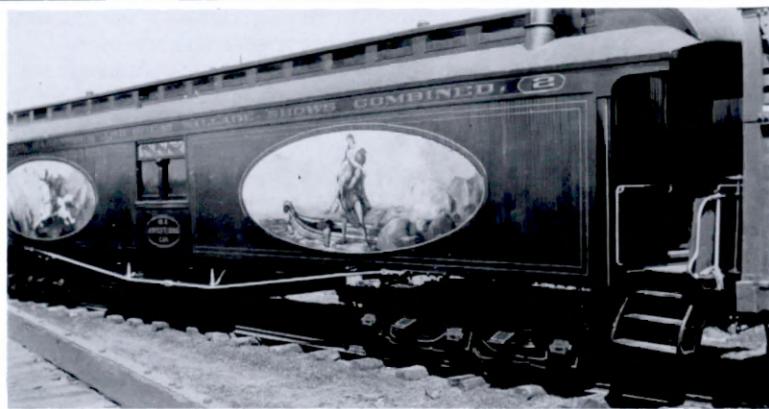
"The show was going through St. Paul on the way from New Richmond to Mankato. The first section including two cook wagons, a seat wagon and a water wagon, which were loaded on the flat cars and two sleepers, was pulling onto a siding.

"As the circus train was moving slowly on to a siding a heavy freight came tearing down the incline. The crew said the engine had lost its air and did not stop at the Chestnut Street crossing. The freight struck the circus train in the middle, cutting off the four flat cars, tossing them to one side of the tracks. The mogul engine plowed over the trucks of the cars and crashed into the front of the sleeper, almost telescoping it. The coaches were derailed and twisted.

"The circus hands were sleeping and they were thrown from their bunks into the aisles of the cars in a promiscuous heap, screaming and moaning. Some were pinned under the seats, while others were held down by the pile of men on top of them.

"A fire started in the front of the sleeper, where so many were struggling to escape death, and the fire department was called out. The fire was quickly extinguished and the firemen turned in and helped a dozen policemen, who had been sent to the scene with an ambulance and two patrol wagons.

"One of the injured men was found with his head through the window and unable to move. Earl Williams, who had both legs broken, was found helpless under a pile of debris. His condition is thought to be the most serious of those who were hurt. It was miraculous that more of the people in the cars were not killed in their bunks. Another fortunate feature was that none of the animal cars were on this section of the train, so there was no danger of the animals being turned loose."



The Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus No. 2 advance advertising car.

The July 15 Colorado Springs, Colorado *Gazette* provided a review of the amount of rain the show had suffered during the season: "The weather man does not predict rain for today but the performers with the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus which is exhibiting at Twenty-Second and Court Streets say that if the day and night passes without a sprinkle a record will be broken. They say that rain follows them, or rather keeps up with the show no matter what section of the country it tours.

"It has been suggested that the authorities in sections of the country suffering from drouth communicate with B. E. Wallace, general manager of the combined shows and have the circus appear at those points. This would insure a rain, so the circus performers claim.

"At Canon City yesterday the first real rain in twelve months came on the same day the Hagenbeck & Wallace circus appeared there. At Colorado Springs Wednesday the second rain in ten months came on the Hagenbeck-Wallace show day. At Denver Monday and Tuesday there was no rain but this is taken to be the exception which proved the rule.

"The circus opened the season at Peru, Indiana on May 2 and has toured Indiana, Ohio, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska and Colorado. Since May 2 there have only been eight show days in which rain did not fall on the main tent. Peculiarly all of the eleven Sundays have been nice.

"At Bucyrus, Ohio on May 30 the Sandusky River arose so rapidly as a result of a cloudburst that the big tent was flooded while the spectators were seeing the show. The performers continued until the water was a foot deep around the hippodrome track. Then the people were taken out in carts and wagons. The last wagon was hauled off the show grounds through four feet of water and it required thirty-two horses and three elephants to move it.

"At Duluth the show encountered a terrible rain storm and at a dozen other points it has begun raining early in the day and continued until late at night. The show folks have grown so used to rain that the performance goes on just the same and the performers hardly notice the discomfort.

"It has been the rainest season I have ever known," said B. E. Wallace this morning. "I have been touring the country for a quarter of a century but I have never yet encountered so much rain. When we were in Wisconsin and Minnesota I told the boys I would guarantee that there would be no rain in Colorado. Now I find that was a rash promise."

"The stock looks fine when it is taken into consideration that the mud has made the season hard on the horses. The fine appearance of the Wallace grays caused much favorable comment in the parade this morning and among those who witnessed the work of unloading.

"The circus is exhibiting to a large crowd this afternoon and early displays prove that it is one of the best shows ever seen in Colorado. It is the first time the Hagenbeck-Wallace show ever ventured so far west. The Wallace show was in Pueblo twelve years ago as many of the older citizens will recall.

"The street parade this morning proved a very creditable display. The liberality of the management in displaying many of the rare animals was praiseworthy. The parade consisted of horsemen and horse-women, animal cages, three bands, a herd of elephants, four zebras, two sacred cows, a big hippo in an open den, a snake charmer with her reptiles coiled at her feet, a large collection of polar bears, and the usual calliope brought up the rear."

Another wreck occurred when the second section of the Hagenbeck train was in a slight wreck at Pueblo, Colorado on July 16, but no one was injured and the property loss was slight. The train was being switched in the Pueblo yards and crashed into a diner which was being backed by another engine. The vestibule of the diner was demolished and the engine handling the show train was badly broken up. The wagons on the flats were forced over the chalks by the bump and the platform of sleeping car No. 26 was crushed. The jar awakened the performers and soon the men were out placing the wagons in position again as the workingmen's section had left the yards for Canon City. There was only a few hours' delay. The damaged sleeper was replaced by a Santa Fe

car. The performers live in 26 and other cars and the accident forced many of them to arise earlier than usual.

The Pueblo *Star-Journal* of July 18 told of wreck in that city the day before, "The Hagenbeck-Wallace show train was in a slight wreck in the Pueblo yards yesterday morning, but there was no loss of life. The property damage was light. A switch engine was backing a diner and crashed into the second section of the circus train. The head-on collision caused the chocks of the wagons to give way and the big circus wagons jumped three or four feet, the wheels in many instances getting between two cars. The vestibule of the diner was demolished and one of the circus sleepers was left in the shops 10 here yesterday until a new drawhead could be put in."

The Hutchison, Kansas *Daily News* printed this handout on show day July 21: "Matinee a fine show. Parade was a wonder by itself.

"Those who think that one circus is enough to see in a season should attend the performance of the Hagenbeck-Wallace show at the fairgrounds tonight, if they were not among the vast throng which witnessed the marvelous trained wild animals and superior circus acts at the grounds this afternoon.

"There was a lion which rode a horse, a tiger which rode an elephant and jumped through hoops of fire, a leopard which performed equestrian feats, a polar bear which simulated drunkenness, an elephant which rode a tricycle, other elephants which played at tenpins, and conducted a barber shop, a polar bear which wrestled with its trainer. Add to these wonderful acts a display in which lions, tigers, leopards, pumas and other wild beasts gathered in a steel arena and were fed raw meat from the trainer's hand and you have the big feature act of the Hagenbeck and Wallace show of 1908.

"The horses with the Hagenbeck and Wallace show are fully up to the Wallace standard. The high school horses were the best ever seen here. 'B'Alma,' ridden by Mrs. Bedini in the center ring was the favorite with those in the choice reserved seats, although when it came to cakewalking 'Magic,' ridden by Sadie Connor, shared the honors. The racing was the most interesting portion of the program to horse lovers and the chariot race which ends the show is worth the price of admission to everyone who is fond of racing.

"The circus arrived in Hutchison early this morning from Dodge City where it played to two large crowds yesterday. The 120 mile run was made in remarkable time. The performance last night was not concluded until nearly ten o'clock and it was one o'clock when the performer's sec-

tion pulled out of the Dodge City yards. Just six hours later the sleepers were laying in the Hutchinson yards. Twenty miles an hour is splendid time for a circus train which is handled through the freight department.

"The arrival of the show trains was witnessed by the usual crowd of curious spectators this morning. The well trained horses, the fine appearance of the show train, the nice looking performers, the orderly workingmen all came in for favorable comment. The street parade left the circus grounds a little late and arrived in the heart of the city a little past eleven. It was a very creditable display. The liberality of the management in displaying

Front cover of a 1908 Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus four page herald. It is printed in red and blue.



many of their rare animals was praiseworthy. 'Big George,' said to be the largest hippopotamus in captivity, blinked lazily at the wondering thousands as he was hauled along in the big den drawn by eight beautiful grays. There were several polar bears, a snake charmer in a glass den with her reptiles coiled at her feet, three bands, four zebras, the Hagenbeck herd of elephants and the usual calliope."

On July 22, two days ahead of the Hagenbeck date in Guthrie, Oklahoma, the *State Register* published this editorial: "Beware of circus gamblers!

"Citizens, and especially farmers, should beware of circus gamblers following Hagenbeck's circus Thursday. In other cities citizens have been fleeced by 'sure thing' men. Read the following from Beatrice, Nebraska Express.

"Beats gamblers at their own game. Harry Dolen, a Beatrice boy, has the distinction of being one of very few residents of this vicinity who went up against the wheel of fortune at the Hagenbeck-Wallace shows last Saturday and returned with more money than he started with, and the funny thing about it is that he owes his good fortune to his sprinting ability and not to luck.

"Harry was employed as a capper by the dealer of the game and when the interest lagged he would step up, play his money, make a good winning and walk away. This would have a tendency to cause some sucker to dive into his jeans for a greenback and try and double his own pile. The result is a foregone conclusion. The sucker invariably lost a good sized roll.

"Dolan was compelled to leave his coat with the dealer as security. Occasionally he was asked to hand over his winnings, but after observing how the rank of the game was and how flagrantly the innocents were skinned, he decided to hang onto a part of his fake good fortune. Having \$35 in his possession, he played \$10 of it and made an excuse to leave the tent to see a friend. The dealer became suspicious and warned the doorkeeper to hold Dolen, but Harry was a little too swift. He started on a run with hat in one hand and \$25 in the other, and followed by a brickbat and one of the gamblers. The brick struck him in the side, but he kept on running finally reaching home in safety, out of breath and \$25 to the good. He says it is the easiest money he has earned for some time.

"One other capper succeeded in hiding away \$8, but these two are the only men so far known in Beatrice who beat the gamblers at their own game."

Meredith reported in the July 25 *Billboard* that the show had made a big hit in Denver and had done good business on July 13 and the *Denver Post* estimated

that 6,000 people were turned away. H. H. Tammen and Otto Floto were frequent visitors during the stand. R. M. Harvey of the Buffalo Bill show visited in Denver as did Gentry show general agent W. O. Tarkington.

The August 29 *Billboard* reported that the week of August 3 had been the banner one of the Hagenbeck season with two records being broken.

On August 3 at Butler, Missouri, the record for the amount of money taken at a single performance was broken and two days later at Warrensburg, Butler's record was broken by more than four hundred dollars. At Lexington, Harrisonville, and Jefferson City the afternoon crowds filled the seats and the hippodrome track. Sedalia was a rainy day but in spite of this the business was big. Several of the Hagenbeck & Wallace people visited the Sells-Floto show at Kansas City on August 10.

The September 3 *Billboard* reported that the Hagenbeck-Wallace road tour was rapidly drawing to a close, and that on October 6 the circus would open an indoor engagement in Chicago.

Business had been good in the farming communities of Tennessee, Missouri and Arkansas in spite of the farmers suffering from very dry weather and poor crops.

At Poplar Bluff, Missouri on September 15 the seating capacity was not large enough to accommodate the big crowd in the afternoon, and tarpaulins had been stretched around the hippodrome track for the people.

On September 10 in Centralia, Illinois some drunken men annoyed the workingmen until a Negro turned and struck a white man. An hour later it was reported that the town fellow had died and a crowd gathered at the runs with the avowed intention of creating trouble.

The circus people realized that the mob might become dangerous, and spirited away the three ring leaders and kept them prisoners in car No. 23 until the show train was a mile out of town. The character of the people who stormed the mob made the better element of Centralia ashamed, and both newspapers came out the next day with articles speaking of the mob as hoodlums, smart-alecks and drunkards.

At Malden, Missouri on September 16 a bunch of toughs amused themselves by pitching pen knives at the feet of the Negroes, seeing how close they could come to them. Later, they began to threaten to lynch a Negro and the workingmen had to fire a volley of shots to scare them away.

The Hagenbeck-Wallace circus closed its regular season at Paxton, Illinois on

October 3. The performers and animals were sent directly to Chicago for the International Amphitheatre indoor stand opening on October 5. The rest of the show went to the winter quarters in Peru, Indiana.

The final *Billboard* report of the 1908 season appeared in the October 17 issue. This article was written by a reporter and is a different style than the usual blurbs from "Wallace Pepper."

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MONDAY SEPT. 21

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Two Big Performances at 2 and 8 P.M. —— Doors Open One Hour Earlier

Show Grounds: Johnson Ave. and Brinkley

This 1908 newspaper ad referred to the the Ringlings who owned Barnum & Bailey and Ringling Bros. Pfening Archives.

"Until October 18, the International Amphitheatre will be the scene of the twicedaily performances of the combined Hagenbeck-Wallace shows which so successfully are being presented under the auspices of the Firemen's Benevolent Association for the benefit of the widows and orphans of the Paid Fire Department of Chicago. Capacity business has so far signalized the event and in view of the unusual excellence of the performance, and the business activity of the 'Firemen' the complete success of the engagement is absolutely assured. The Amphitheatre is decorated in harmonious arrangement of colors punctuated by several pictorial views of fires famous in Chicago's history.

The seating is capably directed by a well drilled corps of the city's best from the fire department, who handle the large crowds with promptitude and dispatch,

thus giving general satisfaction. All in all the location is ideal and it is a comfortable throng who at each performance listen attentively to the musical selections rendered by Merrick's Concert Band, and view the various parades of spangled worthy of special note for their novelty of tasty designs. The Hagenbeck-Wallace aggregation is enabled to substantiate at all times the stories coming from the versatile and enthusiastic Mr. Earle, who handles the publicity and of the enterprise.

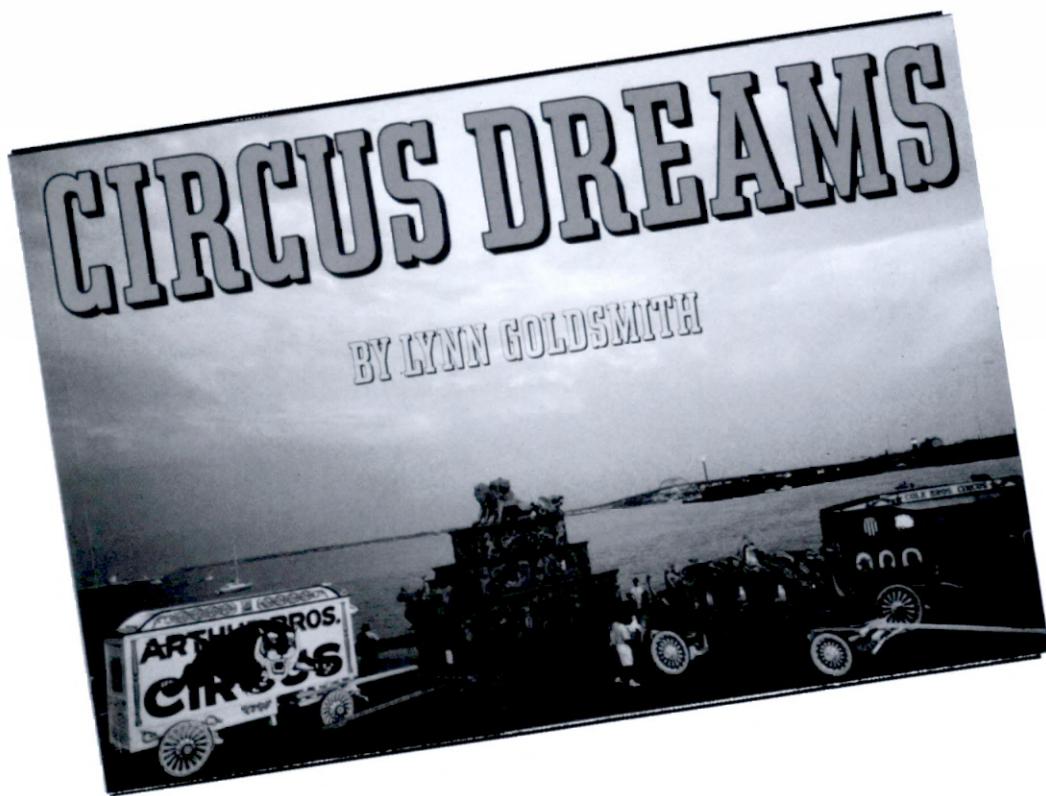
"Mr. John Helliot, in a large barred cage, centrally located in the arena, demands complete attention for his great animal act and evokes a storm of applause by his daring and absolute mastery over as healthy and lively a bunch of lions, tigers and leopards as is in captivity, and winds up by wrestling in convincing fashion with a huge polar bear. Gustave Thalero, with his trained zebras and zebruni bears, is a favorable comparison with the other acts and captures the house when he brings on the dog and pony act, which was the hit of the London Hippodrome. So much for the animals, and as for the other stellar attractions they are such general excellence as to earn the applause which greeted each and every offering.

"The performance included such well-known professional people as the Flying Banvards, the Casting Lloyds, the Van Diemans, and several troupes of Japanese acrobats and bicyclists who more than made good, and a stable of high-school horses that would do credit to the National Horse show. Let it here be mentioned that the artists who in grotesque make-up, nonsensical throughout the show, contribute more than their quota to the success of the evening. Their burlesque on the Merry Widow was a scream, and the little 'Eddie Redway' looking chap who 'did' the Prince brought the crowd to him with his clever travesty. Jim Rutherford's camera comedy met with its usual approval, but the hit of the night was the baseball stunt that Lon Moore is responsible for.

"All Chicago is on edge anyway because of the great world's series in the National League and gives free vent to their feelings and appreciation of the wonderful pantomime that Moore hands them."

The 1908 season was a long one that presented many problems for Benjamin E. Wallace, but it was successful. Wallace continued to operate the show until 1913 when he sold it to Edward Ballard.

E. E. Meredith kept a scrapbook about the 1908 season from which many of the newspaper references used in this article came. Original is in the Pfening Archives.



CIRCUS DREAMS

THE GREAT CIRCUS PARADE

BY LYNN GOLDSMITH

World renowned *National Geographic* photographer Lynn Goldsmith has selected over 120 of her color photographs of the Circus World Museum's circus train to Milwaukee, the assembly area, the big top circus and the Great Circus Parade.

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Bhe number of men who travelled up and down America providing band music in circuses will probably never be known. The music they provided was as varied and had as many shades of talent brought to it as can be imagined. Unlike the stars of the arena, the bandsmen received little notice as individuals thus we have limited knowledge of their ability. We can accept the word of their contemporaries for the few who were truly outstanding. For the rest, we can only assume that if they weren't proficient they wouldn't be employed. As in any other endeavor, a man has to want to be a musician in order to succeed at it, and it is not an easy thing to be.

Carlton O. Robinson was such a man, a life-long and dedicated musician, and his career gives us a good example, even a typical one, of the peregrinations of a circus bandsman in the years before the Second World War. He was born in Horton, Kansas on June 10, 1891. The family moved to Fairfax, Missouri when his father was appointed Postmaster there. He attended the local schools and then matriculated at William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri. It was his intention, at his mother's behest, to become a Baptist minister.

While in college, Robinson joined the Liberty town band, thus launching the musical career he was to follow until he was seventy. A drummer, he got his first professional job in a skating rink in Des Moines, Iowa. It was there that he met Karl King, probably the most famous composer of circus music who ever lived. King was on his way to join Theodore Slout's band on the Yankee Robinson Circus, then being framed in Granger, Iowa. This was King's first engagement with a circus. The year was 1910.

King lived in Fort Dodge, Iowa, and when the Tom Mix Circus played that town on July 9, 1935, Robinson, leader of the Mix band, turned the baton over to King for the pre-show concert. Robinson wrote later: "I think [King] wrote more good band music than any man who ever lived . . . he leafed through our program music and said 'What would you have done for a program if I hadn't been born?' And I could truly admit it would have been tough. Almost every other number was a Karl King composition."

While playing in the skating rink, Robinson answered an ad for a drummer placed by a "Tom" show. He was hired by mail and went to Keokuk, Iowa to become a member of Waugh's Uncle Tom's

Carl Robinson, BANDLEADER

BY STUART THAYER

Cabin Company. Al Waugh, the proprietor, was a barber in Keokuk, who apparently longed to be a showman. When his son-in-law died Waugh talked his daughter into investing the insurance money in what he titled the Old Buffalo Wild West Show. This was in 1910. It was in the next year that he put out the Uncle Tom's Cabin company.

One of Robinson's duties with the Waugh organization was to lead a mean, bucking horse each night from stand to stand. The animal was a leftover from the

The Howes Great London Circus band in 1912. Charles Tinney is sitting in center and Carl Robinson is standing in back of him. Author's collection.



Old Buffalo show as was, presumably, the cowboy who was hired to try to ride him. Robinson and another young man double-rope the horse's halter and led it between two saddled horses. One of Robinson's early show memories was of often waking up at night in the saddle as the led horse tried to bite him.

Waugh's UTC lasted about a month and a half. Robinson then caught on with Coburn's Greater Minstrels and Waugh went back to the barber's trade. Robinson spent several winters with Coburn, whom he described as one of the nicest men for whom he ever worked. Coburn was apparently considerate of his employees and the public as well. Each spring, Robinson went out with a circus beginning in 1912.

Howes Great London Circus proved to be his first job under the big top. In 1912 he signed to play in Herb Ring's band on Coulter Bros. Circus. Unfortunately, Ring died before the season began so all the contracts were voided. Robinson then caught on with the Mugivan and Bowers title. The band had twenty-two members that season, among whom was Henry Kyes, the later well-known circus band leader. The bandmaster was Charles T. Tinney, whom Robinson still disliked when he talked about him sixty years later.

Howes Great London was a grift show of some proportions. One of the favorite scams was that of selling horses. According to Robinson, a lucky boy would approach any farmer who seemed to have an air of prosperity, identify himself as Mr. Howes and explain that they had a

surfeit of horses. Would the gentleman be interested in buying a span at very favorable prices? If he was, he usually had to go to a bank to get the money. A second grifter would accompany the farmer to the bank so that no one else could get to him. When the farmer returned with the money and picked out his horses he would be told to lead them away. As he did so a groom would stop him and after hearing his explanation send him to the office wagon. Mugivan would identify himself and tell the farmer he had been victimized. Mugivan would even help him look for the culprits. By this time the grifters were either dressed as grooms, made up as clowns or hiding in the woods.

Many a night, Robinson recalled, the personnel would have stones thrown at them as they made their way to the cars. The Howes train was shot at so often, as a result of the heavy grift, that Henry Kyes had a thick board that he mounted in his window on the sleeping car.

Robinson was with Howes Great London in 1912, 1913 and 1914. When he decided a change of scenery was in order he got a job in the band at the Old Soldiers' Home in Johnson City, Tennessee. Serving a similar capacity to today's Veterans' Hospitals, Old Soldiers' Homes were usually organized by state governments and at the time Robinson went to Johnson City most of the patients were Civil War veterans.

In the late winter of 1915 he caught on with the John F. Stowe Uncle Tom's Cabin Company out of Niles, Michigan. Robinson characterized the outfit as "bad accommodations, bad show." The train was so unsanitary they had to spray their berths with kerosene every day to kill the bugs. However, he did get to become an actor while employed with it. He was what is called "a quick read," that is, he could memorize lines in a short time, a virtue much admired in such circles. People were always leaving the company, showing up for work in a state of inebriation, or not knowing their parts. During the course of the season Robinson substituted for several different people. A very tall, thin man, he said he looked ridiculous in some parts, juveniles, for instance.

One memorable evening, he played five different characters. It was his habit to wipe off most of his make-up and go to the front of the theatre as the crowd was leaving in order to hear any comments they might have. After his five-part



Jones Bros. Circus big show band ready for a parade in 1915. Robinson is the tall musician on left. Pfening Archives.

masterpiece he mingled with the patrons and heard one man ask another:

"Did you like the show?"

"Yeah, it was pretty good," came the reply, "but I never saw so many tall, skinny bastards in all my life!"

That summer--1915--Robinson was hired again by Charles T. Tinney, this time to play in the band on Jones Bros.' World-Toured Shows. This company had begun the season as Jones Bros. and Wilson Shows, owned by J. Augustus Jones and Harry Wilson. About mid-season the partners had a falling out and Jones reverted to his previous title. With the break-up musicians were needed and that was how Carl got the offer of employment.

Tinney, the bandleader, was a very nasty fellow, in Robinson's book. He would red light band members for the slightest infractions. And he usually fired them when the train was out in the middle of nowhere. Water stops were one of his favorite places for dismissing those who didn't measure up. Robinson told us of

The Tom Mix Roundup stage show personnel in 1933. Robinson is third from left in back row. Author's collection.



one poor fellow left sitting on the tracks and crying, his duffle beside him. Another, William G. McIntosh, was red-lighted on Cape Breton Island with no notice, no money and no instrument. He later caught on with Hagenbeck-Wallace and wrote Carl that there was a place for him. "I turned it down," Robinson wrote, "but I should have gone."

Tinney hated Italians, according to Robinson, though we find Tito Altobelli as trombone player in

the well-known photo taken in 1912 in front of the Lion and Gladiator wagon. In 1914 Tinney hired a bass player named Tony Brown. After he had been with the show long enough to feel secure about his job, Brown told the leader, "Mr. Tinney, I write you many times under my Italian name and I don't get any answer so I write you Tony Brown and I get the job." Tinney fired him on the spot.

When Carl decided to leave the Jones show, he agreed on a date with Tinney and even arranged a substitute. He very carefully told the substitute, whom Carl had taught how to play, not to come on the show until the date Carl and Tinney had agreed upon. Otherwise, he cautioned, Tinney would dump Carl as soon as the substitute arrived. This would cost Carl money as he had agreed to leave on payday.

The substitute refused to believe that Tinney would get rid of Robinson before his notice was up and came on the show a few days early. They were way out in western Oklahoma and Tinney told Carl to get out as soon as he saw the new man was there. Few of us are privileged to extract revenge for wrongs done to us—or perhaps most of us aren't petty enough to desire it—but Robinson was given a golden opportunity when he returned to the show train to get his belongings. Finding

himself alone in the car in which the band rode, he took a razor and slit just enough of Tinney's clothes to equal what he thought he had lost in wages plus a couple of strokes for the boys who had been redlighted out in the boondocks.

The Jones Bros. Circus was another graft-ridden outfit and had caught the attention of the local sheriff. That gentleman approached Robinson as he sat on the platform on the day he left and engaged him in conversation. Learning that Carl had just quit the show he asked him if he would point out the grifters to him; he even took him to dinner--the train to St. Louis was a long time coming--but Carl demurred. Later, he boarded the train and found the two grifters the sheriff had been looking for. When they saw Robinson they immediately latched on to him--they didn't want him sending a wire back--and sat with him all the way into St. Louis.

The winter of 1915-16 Robinson played drums in the band at the Dayton, Ohio, Soldiers' Home. It was a very good band in his memory and he especially appreciated the bandmaster for ignoring letters from Tinney trying to get him discharged.

We realize that our comments on Charles Tinney fall into the nature of pseudo-history, being hearsay, but Robinson's version of the facts were so clear to the eighty-year old man that we had no problem believing him. Tinney must be listed as among the successful circus bandsmen of his day. He was a trumpet player (cornetist) in Carl Neel's band on Sells & Gray in 1901, on Sparks in 1902, and was bandleader for Martin Downs' Cole Bros. in 1904 to 1907, Norris & Rowe in 1910 and John Robinson in 1916 in addition to those we've mentioned. He apparently retired after the 1916 season.

In the spring of 1916, May 27, to be exact, Robinson hired on with Ringling Bros. "for eighteen dollars a week, board,



Robinson and Babe on the Sam B. Dill-Tom Mix Circus in 1934. Author's collection.

and the use and occupancy of the cars." He was with this show only three months, leaving on July 3, 1916, in Lansing, Michigan. He had decided that he had better learn a trade if he was ever to get ahead in life. It turned out that his next trade was to be as a soldier.

The Ringling show, as we all know, was a clean, well-run organization, free of graft, but filled with rules. Two bandsmen of Carl's acquaintance were fired when they talked to two bally girls for the second time. Apparently, the first time was free.

A different aspect was the story of the

The Tom Mix Circus band in 1935. Robinson is fifth from left. Johnny Agee is standing in front. Pfening Archives.



bandsman from a Balkan country whose wife, at some sacrifice, came to see him when the circus played near their home. She arrived during the performance and tried to reach the bandstand. She spoke no English and the doorman refused her entrance. She finally made a rush for the band and the doorman grabbed her and dragged her out. Charlie Ringling happened by and upbraided the man, "As long as you're on this show, I don't want to see you ever lay hands on a woman," he told him. When they finally learned what she wanted Ringling allowed her to sit near the band for the remainder of the stand.

Carl arranged for a drummer named Sam Dobie to replace him in the Ringling band. Dobie was to arrive on July 3 in time to play parade. Carl packed his drums and as parade mount approached began to get anxious. "Anybody seen Sam?" he kept asking. "Anybody seen Sam?" Dobie arrived in time, as it turned out, but for years afterward, whenever Robinson ran into anyone from that 1916 band they'd greet him with, "Anyone seen Sam?"

Robinson joined the army and served until 1918. Naturally, he was a bandsman.

After discharge he joined a Jacksonville, Florida theatre pit band, his vocation into the 1930s. At first he still wore his uniform to work and he caught his future wife's eye because of it, he claimed. They were married for fifty-two years and died within five weeks of each other.

During the early thirties musicians were a glut on the market, but Carl managed to pick up enough theatre work to keep food on the table. In 1933 he was fortunate to be offered a job as leader of a small combo by a Florida theatre chain.

On his way to Florida, driving at night, Carl had a prophetic experience. He saw something in the road and, thinking it was kittens or puppies someone had abandoned, he got out to see what they were. It turned out to be elephant manure. He claimed he bowed down to it and continued on his journey. A few miles up the road he came upon the Haag Bros. truck show. He didn't know it then, but he was on his way back into the circus business.

The people who hired his six-man combo hadn't told him who he was going to play behind, thus they were able to get him more cheaply than if they had told him that the star of the show was Tom Mix. The theatre tour involved Mix, the Ward sisters aerial act, James Agee, Mrs. Gail Turney, Jack Knapp, Herman Nolan, Joe Bowers and Ed Hendershot. They carried Tony, Mix' famous movie horse, and

two liberty horses. In addition they presented some roping demonstrations. Dale Turney was the manager, just as he was later with the circus. The group was called the Tom Mix Round-up.

In 1934 the whole group was absorbed in the Sam B. Dill Circus. Carl knew Dill from Howes Great London, where Dill had been treasurer. In 1934, Mix became Dill's partner in the show and when Dill died in early 1935, Mix became sole owner.

"It was an ideal arrangement," Robinson wrote, "with Sam looking out for the business and Tom looking out for the people."

The history of the Tom Mix Circus has been covered in previous articles (*Bandwagon*, xv: 2 and 3, 1971), thus we do not need to chronicle it here. However, there were some aspects of Robinson's experience that did not appear in the history. Perhaps foremost is his feeling that the five years he was with Mix were the best of his career. The show itself was successful through 1937, and then fell apart in 1938, but it is the good times we remember. Being part of a popular and well-equipped show would, it seems, make the experience a favorite one in memory.

"I never regarded myself as a great musician," Robinson said at one time, "and I figured my musical appreciation was about on a par with the average customer out there in the seats. So, I resolved to keep my band melodious at all times. Many popular numbers at that time were adaptable to the circus and I interspersed popular music with standard circus music, so that we never lost the circus atmosphere. I felt that band arrangements of popular music were not as good as orchestral arrangements, so I used the latter. It worked out fine. I got many compliments on that band."

When Carl left the Mix show in 1938, Dale Turney told him that the band was the only department they'd never had a complaint about. Sam Dill once told him that Robinson's was the best band he'd ever had on the show.

Dill ran a tight show and when he died things got "loose," according to Robinson. Mix had given Robinson's aged father a job as ticket-taker in the side show. After the last tip had been run through the tent, Robinson, Senior, counted the tickets and reported to the red wagon. Then he burned the tickets. The ticket sellers approached him with a scheme to save some of the tickets which they would then resell and split the proceeds with Rob-



Robinson on the Mix show in 1936 or 1937. Author's collection.

inson. Robinson, Senior, thankful to have a job at his age, turned them down. Carl Robinson used this as an example of the kind of thing that went on after Dill was gone.

One of the most amazing memories that Robinson had was of an incident in Burley, Idaho on May 19, 1936. A storm hit the show just after the matinee performance. The menagerie tent went down immediately. Then someone—not Denny Helms—ordered the big top to be lowered onto the seats. When the top hit the ground four of the canvas crew jumped on it and ran to the center pole to unhook the bale ring and start unlacing. The wind got under the tent and blew it up like a balloon, the four men riding it up. The top was still guyed out, of course, and when it went up as far as it could, there was a sound like a cannon firing. The four men were thrown straight up in the air. Then the tent collapsed back on the seats. The men fell toward the earth and certain injury when the wind blew the tent up again and it caught them. This happened several times before the canvasmen were able to work their way off the edge of the top.

Robinson's band and he, himself, were all union members. In the late thirties the scale was thirty two dollars and fifty cents a week. The Mix show didn't pay that much, but Carl explained to his men that they all had jobs and were being fed and maybe they shouldn't complain if

they were not being paid the minimum. They agreed that he was correct. The union sent inspectors out regularly to check on the wages being paid. These men would quiz the band members. One time the union rep told Carl that he had his men so well rehearsed that if the rep were to come at night and pound on the band trailer every musician would roll over in his sleep and shout, "Thirty-two fifty!"

Such were the memories of twenty-seven years of troupers. Robinson left the faltering Mix show in Utica, New York in 1938. He had been offered a contract by the Florida State Symphony and he never played in a circus band again. He became a taxidermist after he retired from music, and was active in American Legion and Boy Scout activities in Jacksonville, Florida, his home for sixty-one years.

In the course of researching the history of the Tom Mix Circus, this writer interviewed Carl Robinson in 1971, when he was seventy-nine years old. This article is based on those interviews and letters from Robinson that constituted a correspondence that lasted until Carlton O. Robinson's death on August 25, 1972.

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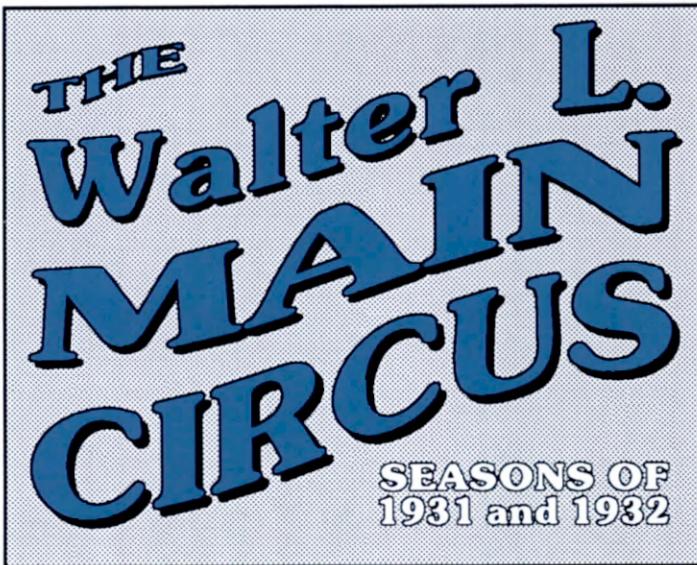
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PART II THE 1932 SEASON

Foreword: One of the most interesting aspects of the 1932 Walter L. Main story was the part played by Fred Buchanan to whom history has assigned one of the worst reputations of a showman in this century. This stems from the infamous "red-lighting" incident following the sudden close of his Robbins Bros. Circus on September 12, 1931 in which one man was killed and several others were injured after being thrown from the moving train. This happened fourteen miles from Mobile, Alabama as the train was moving over the Mobile & Ohio Railroad enroute to the show's quarters at Lancaster, Missouri. The story of Buchanan's 1923 World Bros. Circus and 1924-31 Robbins Bros. was published in the Bandwagon in the early 1980s.

The September-October 1983 issue had the full story of the 1931 season, including the "red-lighting" and subsequent events. Readers are advised to review this article in order to fully understand the past history and character of Fred Buchanan. Again, we are grateful to Roger Boyd for the important information he furnished on the Walter L. Main Circus in 1932, including the role of Fred Buchanan. Although only a teenager, a "pony punk," as he termed his position on the show that season, he was privy to much unpublished information concerning the show through his friendship with owner James Heron.

Part one of this story left the show in quarters at the Winchester, Virginia fairgrounds with no title in use other than its corporate name, Motor Circus Corporation. When the new year approached no definite title had been announced. News in *Billboard* was extremely scarce during the opening weeks of 1932. One article of importance came in the January 23 issue, but at the time its significance was not known to the circus world. It stated that Fred Buchanan was making a tour of winter quarters of motorized circuses in an effort to determine whether or not it would be advisable to place large parade wagon bodies on semi-trailer trucks. Buchanan stated that in his opinion the railroad circus could not exist at an admission price in keeping with the times, and that until times got better admission prices must be kept low, lower than with a railroad circus. The story ended by speculating that it was quite possible Robbins



BY JOSEPH T. BRADBURY

Bros. would take to the road as a motorized circus.

In a short note in an early February "Under the Marquee" section of the *Billboard*, W. A. Atkins advised he had recently visited the Motor Circus Cor-

Special litho used by Walter L. Main in 1932. Circus World Museum collection.



poration's quarters in Winchester, Virginia. He said that Fred Buchanan of Robbins Bros. also visited there a short time earlier.

At this time the facts about the Robbins Bros. show in 1931 were not known, however the February 13 *Billboard* clarified them in a piece headlined "W. P. Hall buys Robbins Bros. Circus." The story said the show had been sold by the Lancaster, Missouri sheriff on foreclosure of a mortgage held by the buyer. There were no other bidders and the amount was not disclosed. The property bought by Hall included five flats, five coaches, two stocks, one elephant car, forty-six baggage horses, twenty ring horses, twelve ponies, six camels,

six elephants, two lions, two leopards, one hyena, monkeys, bears, zebras, wagons, and tents. It was now clear that Buchanan was completely out of Robbins Bros.

The next bit of information concerning Heron's show was a *Billboard* report in early April in which William (Honest Bill) Newton, Jr. said he had recently disposed of his interest in the Walter L. Main Circus. There were no more details but the assumption was made that Heron was now in complete charge of the show.

Finally the April 16 *Billboard* reported that the Walter L. Main Circus would open its 53rd season on April 28 in Winchester. The show was to be transported on 67 trucks, and would be piloted by Heron and Walter L. Main. A. C. Bradley, general agent, planned to route it into heavily populated territory, principally in Eastern cities and in New England. A special feature was to be a wild west concert presented entirely by film actors. The story went on to say that the outfit had been receiving new equipment and all other paraphernalia had been repaired and renovated. Cuban Mack and his wife were to be with the show.

A short time later the *Billboard* noted that in a recent issue it had said that Heron and Walter L. Main would operate the Main circus, but Main sent a correction: "James Heron is the manager and I have nothing to do with the show except that I have leased my name to Mr. Heron for the 1932 season. I also will work for him in an official capacity, on a salary in advance of the show."

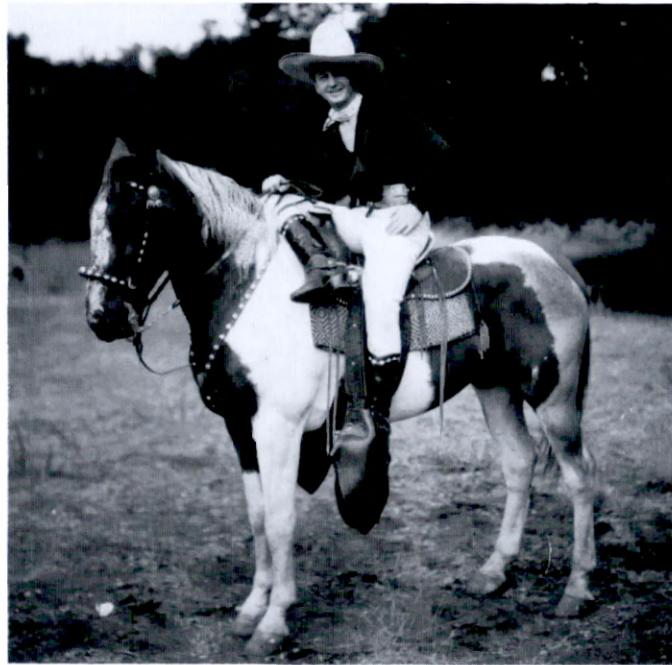
A short time before opening day a *Billboard* report coming from Joe B.

Webb of Seal Bros. Circus at Grand Prairie, Texas said that recent visitors to that show included Tom Gorman, Bob Easton, Leo Coleman, and Rex Cole. They were from Hollywood and were on their way to join the Walter L. Main Circus. They had Chico the wonder horse of the movies with them. This was the first indication that Tom Gorman would be with the show. His role was never clarified, but during the season he did perform some kind of service for which at the end of the season he would claim \$8850 due him. In all probability this was for funds loaned the show.

In 1932 the nation celebrated the bicentennial of the birth of George Washington and many circuses featured patriotic type specs in their programs. Included was Walter L. Main which had an elaborate and well received closing spectacle, Historic America for which special billing paper was printed. Downie Bros. was another circus featuring the George Washington theme. That show placed a beautiful full side painting of Washington crossing the Delaware on its No. 1 bandwagon, a long semi.

Despite the several circuses that failed

The Bill Cody title was used by the show in Westerly, Rhode Island. Pfening Archives.



Movie cowboy Bill Cody the feature of the 1932 Walter L. Main Circus. Pfening Archives.

In 1931 there were still a goodly number to answer the season's starting bell. The number of railers from the previous year had dropped from six to four. Those going out included Ringling-Barnum, 90 cars; Hagenbeck-Wallace, 30 cars; Sells-Floto, 30 cars and Al G. Barnes, 30 cars. Motorized shows, in addition to Walter L. Main, were Downie Bros., Mighty Haag, Sam B. Dill, Seils-Sterling, Schell Bros., Barnett Bros., Russell Bros., Lewis Bros., Wheeler & Sautelle, E. A. Harrington's Nickle Plate, Original Gentry Bros., Seal Bros., Fisher Bros., Sam Dock, Henry Bros., Snyder Bros., Vandenburg Bros., Conroy Bros., Orton Bros., Stevens Bros., Barton Bros., Robinson Bros. and Farris.

At the start of the season no railroaders paraded, although Sells-Floto would add the march during the final days of the tour. Most of the truck outfits which paraded in 1931 continued to do so, although Main dropped the daily march. None of the Heron shows would ever again parade on a regular basis.

The Main show opened its season in Winchester, Virginia, on April 28. The May 14 Billboard covered the inaugural stand with the following article: 'The Walter L. Main Circus and Cody Ranch Wild West inaugurated the season at the fairgrounds here last Thursday. It had wintered here. A large crowd was on hand in the afternoon and at night it was necessary to permit customers to occupy grass plots around rings.

"Outstanding feature of program is

Bill Cody, motion picture star, who presented cowboys and girls and his Hollywood horse, Chico, in sports of the west. Cody feature was used for after-show. Captain Walker and six Nubian lions; Costello Sisters, equestriennes; Peasley Sisters, aerialists, and several other acts were on program; also Charlie Robinson, clown. Other acts will soon join.

"The trucks and wagons have all been painted red, and James Heron should be proud of the outfit. The writer, W. A. Atkins, was surprised to note how well the paraphernalia looked on the lot.

"At Martinsburg, West Virginia the next day the crowd was larger at matinee than at night because opposition from Bruce Greater Shows and Freiberg Players at high school auditorium. Show's prices are 25 and 50 cents. Outfit is headed for Pennsylvania and New York."

The May 1932 *White Tops* carried an interesting review of the show. It stated the Main show had added Cody Ranch Wild West to its title. Young Bill Cody of Uni-

The show used the Bostock title at Charleston, West Virginia in August. Joe Bradbury collection.

Wait for the Big Circus—Wait
CHARLESTON
MONDAY - AUGUST - 8
 (Season of 1932.)

BOSTOCK'S CIRCUS
 and the
CODY RANCH Wild West
 presenting the
BILL CODY IN PERSON
 with his cowboys, cowgirls, Indians and famous
 MOVING PICTURE HORSES
 DIRECT FROM HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA
 APPEARING IN PERSON EACH PERFORMANCE

GOLIATH LARGEST ELEPHANT ON EARTH
 (WEIGHS A TON MORE THAN JUMBO)

50,000 TRACKLESS TRAIN SEATS FOR 10,000 PEOPLE
 LOCKHART'S JUMPING HORSES

PATRIOTIC SPECTACLE
"HISTORIC AMERICA"
 with PAUL REVERE, WASHINGTON, LEE, LINCOLN, GRANT, ROOSEVELT, ETC.

20 PERFORMING LIONS 20 PERFORMING LEOPARDS, SEALIONS, CAMELS
 "JARGO" GIANT GORILLA

Historic America
 PAUL REVERE, GEORGE WASHINGTON,
 GEN. GRANT, GEN. LEE, LINCOLN, ROOSEVELT,
 SOLDIERS, COWBOYS AND INDIANS

Greatly Reduced Prices This Year
25 CENTS TO ALL

ONLY CIRCUS COMING THIS SEASON!
 WESTERLY, ONE DAY ONLY JUNE 22
 WEDNESDAY, OAK HILL FARM CIRCUS GROUNDS.
 VIA ITS TRACKLESS TRAIN OF 100 CARS
 "DIRECT FROM HOLLYWOOD"
BILL CODY
 FAMOUS WESTERN SCREEN STAR IN PERSON AND HIS
RANCH WILD WEST
 BILL CODY APPEARS IN PERSON AT EACH PERFORMANCE WITH HIS COWBOYS, COWGIRLS, INDIANS AND MOVING PICTURE HORSES
 AMALGAMATED WITH THE INTERNATIONAL CIRCUS (MAIN AND ROBBINS) FOR THE SEASON OF 1932.
GOLIATH LARGEST ELEPHANT ON EARTH (WEIGHS A TON MORE THAN JUMBO)
 20 PERFORMING LIONS 20 PERFORMING LEOPARDS, SEALIONS, CAMELS
 "JARGO" GIANT GORILLA
 LOCKHART'S JUMPING HORSES
 SEATS FOR 10,000 PEOPLE
 PRICES REDUCED FIRST TIME IN 12 YEARS.
 ADULTS, 50 CENTS. CHILDREN, 25 CENTS.
 Tickets on Sale on Circus Day at VARS BROS. DRUG STORE.



Main semi-trailer carrying camels. John Cutler photo.

versal movies was featured in the after show concert and would also appear in all big show performances. The show had renamed the elephant Jap, Goliath and was billing it as the largest elephant on earth. Also featured in the billing was Jargo, a giant gorilla (probably a chimp). Lockhart's jumping horses were prominent in the advertising as was the closing spec, Historic America with Paul Revere, George Washington, General Grant, General Lee, and Lincoln included. A final note said the show expected to stay close to the New England states all season.

A complete review of the show didn't appear until latter in the season. But nearly each week the *Billboard* printed information.

The May 7 issue reported that Bert Rickman, Fat Arnold, and several others who were on Robbins Bros. in 1931 were then with Walter L. Main. Another note said that Bert Proctor was the band leader and that Fletcher Smith, well known circus press man, was back in harness, doing story work a week ahead of the show.

A week later the *Billboard* advised that Jerome T. Harriman was then the show's general agent succeeding A. C. Bradley. He was to have full charge of the entire advance department. Harriman had been associated with Heron for the prior twelve years. The advance was to be operated much the same as in the past. Robert L. Morgan was the advertising manager with twelve men and four trucks ahead. A short note in the circus fans section of the same issue said that reports from several CFA members who had visited the Main Circus indicated that Fred Buchanan was then on the show.

Some historians have mentioned Fred Buchanan's appearance with Heron's 1932 show, and the Sturtevant files even suggest that Heron and Buchanan jointly operated the Main show that season.

I asked Roger Boyd about Buchanan's part in 1932. He said that Heron was the

manager and in complete charge of the show and Buchanan in no way functioned as a co-manager or assistant manager. Buchanan had no financial interest in the show and in fact according to Boyd no one had any money when the season started, neither Heron nor Buchanan. However, Buchanan did furnish some canvas and provided the costumes for the two specs, the opening Mother Goose in Fairyland and closing Historic America. Buchanan had often used these themes with Robbins Bros. in the late 20s. We can only wonder where he had these costumes and spec props stored, but they were at his quarters in Granger, Iowa, the home base for all of the Buchanan railroad circuses except the final season when during the winter of 1930-31 the show was quartered at William P. Hall's place in Lancaster, Missouri. Buchanan also lost his home, farm, and quarters in Granger about this time. He also brought over a number of people who had been on his Robbins show, including Earl Sennott and Ralph Noble, superintendent and boss canvas man respectively.

Some of the performers had also been with him on Robbins in 1931, including the very talented Niquette Sisters. Buchanan's group of grifters which had populated Robbins Bros. the previous season also followed him to the Main show. In all probability his "take" came from the profits generated by the graft. Boyd says that in the 1932 side show they had every possible way to take a fellow's money, "nuts" [shell game], "broads" [three card monte], and of course a "cooch" with blowoff in the side show. Also on the show, but

probably operated on the midway as was his custom rather than in the side show, was George Bedoni, who the late Bill Woodcock Sr. once termed "the king of all jam pitchmen."

I asked Boyd about the claim in several *Billboard* stories that Buchanan was superintendent of privileges. He was of the opinion that wasn't the case, at least for all of them. He said that at one time during the season Lonnie Buchanan, Fred's brother, came on to take charge of the candy stands.

The actual arrangement between Heron and Buchanan is unknown, the exact details probably being known only to the two men. Everything he had once owned was gone, such was the way it was for many showman during the depression.

One person who did have a sizeable financial interest in the 1932 Main show was Honest Bill Newton, who had disposed of his share of the circus to Heron in the early weeks of 1932. Heron probably paid little or nothing down to Newton. He had nothing to pay and could only promise time payments if business permitted. In any event at the end of the season Newton would claim the show owed him slightly over \$7,100 for services and labor in operation of certain properties of the circus. Newton is believed to have retained title to his camels and elephant, Jap. Likewise Heron personally owned the elephant Nemo, purchased in his wife's name.

The Main show had a fine drawing card in movie cowboy Bill Cody, although he was not in the top echelon of stars like Tom Mix, Ken Maynard, and Hoot Gibson, the famed western stars of the 1930s. Cody was on the second level, but still well known, along with Jack Hoxie, Tom Tyler, and Reb Russell, all of whom appeared with circuses during this period. Cody also operated a small pit show on the midway featuring his

Elephant Jap in an open top semi-trailer in 1932. John Cutler photo.



horses and was billed heavily in the show's advertising. The Cody Wild West paper was on equal footing with the regular Main bills. Much of it was on separate sheets and was posted side by side with the Main title. It was designed so it could be used as a separate show title. This was done at some stands late in the season when the outfit was billed only under the Cody title.

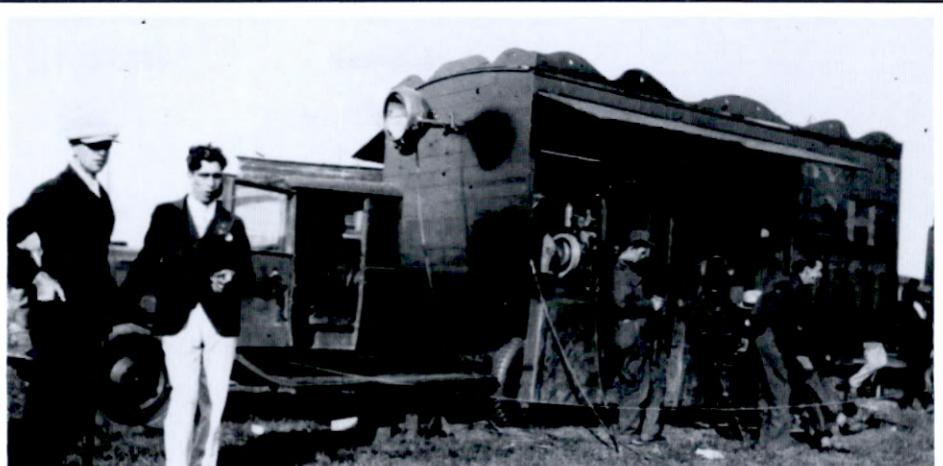
After the opening the show moved into West Virginia for a single date at Martinsburg and then went into Pennsylvania at Chambersburg for ten additional stands in the Keystone State. The first five stands produced incredibly good business. The *Billboard* said the stand at York, Pennsylvania on May 2 had mighty good business, capacity in the afternoon and a turnaway at night.

The May 21 *Billboard* said that Jack Walsh, who had the pit show, closed at Lancaster, Pennsylvania on May 3 owing to illness. He returned to his Cincinnati home and was succeeded by Elmer Fry.

Easton on May 12 was the final Keystone state date, then the show moved into New Jersey for stands at Plainfield, Perth Amboy and Elizabeth. While in the greater New York area the show went into the Empire state for dates at Tottenville and Stapleton. Other New Jersey stands were played at New Brunswick, Morristown, and Tenafly. Then it was on to New England for a lengthy tour.

Leonard Traube of the New York *Billboard* office wrote in his column "Out In The Open," in the May 28 issue, that Main was clicking with customers in a big way as at Perth Amboy, New Jersey they sat them on the ground, had another big house in Plainfield, and plenty of business at Tottenville on Staten Island. Traube said: "When we reviewed the show at Elizabeth the other day, the big top did capacity, but an executive of the show was singing the blues because the straw wasn't called in. One of the highlights of the performance is the clos-

Jap the elephant next to his trailer on Main in 1932. John Cutler photo.



Main light plant semi-trailer in New Bedford, Massachusetts on May 30, 1932. John Cutler photo.

ing, wherein is depicted, in characteristic costume, events in the history of this country in which our most famous statesmen and soldiers were leading figures, Washington, Lincoln, Roosevelt etc. Jimmy Heron has been receiving congrats for the flourishing business being enjoyed by the outfit he pilots. And there was Fred Buchanan superintending the privileges."

Several other shows had played in Connecticut before Main. Snyder Bros. was the first in the state and was followed by Wheeler & Sautelle. Ringling-Barnum and Sells-Floto were due there in about two weeks. The Ringling interests sent Sells-Floto into New England to pick up the dates formerly played by Sparks which was not on the road that season. Main's first stand was in Stamford on May 23. Other dates were at Bridgeport and New Haven. Five Massachusetts stands came next at Springfield, Holyoke, Worcester, New Bedford and Fall River. The show then went into Rhode Island for New Port and Woonsocket before returning to Massachusetts to play Brockton, Quincy, Lynn and Lowell.

The performance had been strengthened considerably by the time Main got into New England, a major addition being the Joe Hodges riding act.

The June 11 *Billboard* carried several informative articles about the show. It was noted the show played New Bedford, Massachusetts on Memorial Day and despite the economic conditions the day's receipts exceeded expectations. The performance in three

rings was well staged and moved smoothly and rapidly. There was a snap to the opening presentation, Alice in Wonderland. William Powell, high-wire performer, had recently joined. Joe Hodges' comedy riding turn was well received. Howard Bryant was working straight in the act. Bill Cody and his company of westerners was going over big.

Other notes said that at the suggestion of the New Bedford chief of police Cody and his company, including Rex Cole and Bill Gonzales, provided an impromptu performance for crippled children at the Sol-E-Mar Hospital. Newspaper cameramen were present and took photos which were published in next day's papers. William Dunn, a cameraman for Fox Movietone, was on the midway to obtain views of the crowd.

It was mentioned that the side show also had a good day in New Bedford. Among those in show were Cuban Mack, Viola Mack, Don Taylor, Prof. Oscar, Elwood Carter, Norris (Tuba) Manago, Ernest Henderson, Amos Strickman, Lowdown Johnson, Ernest White, Ruth Henderson, Vivian Johnson, Shuffling Sam and Hot (Cha) Amoss in the band. In the cookhouse were Whitey King, chef; Dixie Adams, steward; Little Al, waiter; Ben Sullivan, second cook; and Harry Troos and H. Spruce, waiters. Jack Kingston was doorman at the big top.

Other stories in the same issue noted that W. J. Allen, who found the body of the Lindbergh baby, had been signed to appear in the Main side show. He joined at New Bedford. (The kidnapping of the Charles and Anne Lindbergh baby earlier in the spring was the most famous in United States history.) At Bridgeport on May 24 the show drew crowded houses at both performances after one of the greatest publicity campaigns ever conducted by a circus in that city. Ringling-Barnum was to play there June 15 and area was heavily billed. At Springfield on May 26 business was fair at the matinee but the tent packed at night, according to John W.



Yost. Yost had also seen Wheeler & Sautelle at Glastonbury, Connecticut on May 28 and reported light business at the matinee.

In the same issue the "Under the Marquee" column, Circus Solly wrote that the Walter L. Main title would be changed to World Bros. and that J. H. (Doc) Oyler had taken over as side show manager, replacing James Shropshire who was seriously ill. Jargo the gorilla which underwent an operation had died recently, and Red Payne was to take over the band.

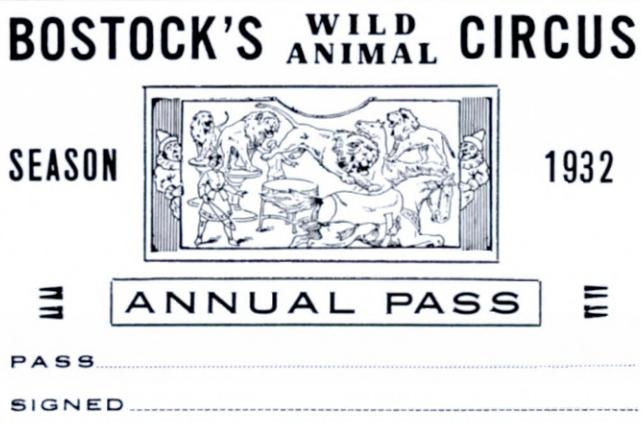
Circus Solly was correct in saying a change of title would take place but was wrong about the World title being used.

A week later the *Billboard* stated Main was the first show to play Rhode Island in the season and had been given a warm welcome. It played to capacity houses in Newport on June 1. In the crowd were several groups from the resort's society colony. The following day at Woonsocket there was a good matinee and near capacity crowd at night. The next show for Rhode Island was to be Ringling-Barnum at Providence on June 13. It was also mentioned that the Main show was using a 100 foot round with three 40s big top with the performance in three rings. There was a four pole menagerie tent and three pole kid show tent. Another item said that Mr. and Mrs. Frank Littlefield motored to Lynn, Massachusetts on June 6 to visit the Main show. They reported a nice big show performance and side show. Attendance in the afternoon was fair and a turnaway came at night.

In the same issue the show advertisement for sale; "Circus Big Top. 100 foot with three 40 foot middle pieces, Driver made, in very good condition. Priced for quick sale, \$300. Can be seen with Walter L. Main Circus. Wire quick. James Heron, 135 Chandler St., Worcester, Mass."

The very good business the show had been enjoying so far in the season had convinced Heron that the present big top was too small so an order was placed for a larger one to be delivered shortly.

The show went into New Hampshire at Manchester on June 8, and played Portsmouth the next day and then entered Maine for stands at Portland, Lewiston, Augusta, and Biddeford. Afterwards came a return to



Season pass issued for the Bostock title in 1932. Pfening Archives.

New Hampshire at Nashua and Keene, then followed one final visit to Massachusetts and two more stands at Greenfield and Gardner. On June 20 the show was again in Rhode Island at East Providence with Pawtucket and Westerly to follow. Three Connecticut dates, Norwich, Meriden, and Torrington completed the New England tour which had seen the show playing the population centers.

A number of items appeared in the June 25 *Billboard* relating to the Main show. Snyder Bros. was also in New Hampshire at that time and Downie Bros. had earlier played the state. Main was the first motorized show to play Westerly, Rhode Island, and heavily billed the city for a June 22 date using the Bill Cody Wild West title. Fletcher Smith had come into Westerly one week before and landed plenty of space in the local press. It was mentioned that Greenfield, Massachusetts had refused to grant a license

A side show opening in Newport, Rhode Island on June 1, 1932. John Cutler photo.



for Sells-Floto to appear there on June 25. The city fathers said they wanted no more circuses for rest of the season. Walter L. Main had played there on June 17 and Snyder Bros. had also made the town. The issue carried another ad to sell the show's present big top.

Billboard reported a week later that some Main circus employees had been injured late Saturday night on June 18 when a coupling pin connecting a pullman commissary trailer came loose while being towed by one of the circus trucks on a jump from Gardner, Massachusetts to East Providence, Rhode Island. The accident occurred at Lonsdale, Rhode Island. The trailer tipped over onto the roadway. Four men were taken to Notre Dame Hospital for treatment while the other three suffered only minor injuries. The driver and two other men who were riding in the trailer were not hurt.

A report from circus fan Wade H. Maynard informed the *Billboard* that Honest Bill Newton, Jr. was on the Mighty Haag Circus when he saw it at Pearl, Illinois on June 15. This was the first indication of Newton's whereabouts since leaving the Main show.

Other July accounts stated that at Meriden, Connecticut on June 24 the matinee drew good attendance and there was a capacity crowd at night. Two-thirds of the audience remained for the Cody after show. It was mentioned the new big top was to arrive soon.

The show made a Sunday run into New York state for a stand at Port Chester on June 27 followed by Yonkers the next day. One final date was played in Connecticut at Danbury, June 29, then it was back to the Empire state for eleven consecutive stands.

At Danbury the largest crowd that had turned out for a circus in more than six years filled the Main big top to capacity at the evening performance. A fairly good size crowd also saw the matinee. One performance was marred slightly during a concert announcement when one of the horses became unmanageable and plunged from the track into a ring where ring attendants were setting up a tight wire apparatus. Four of the attendants were knocked to the ground, one so badly injured he had to be carried out. At Danbury it was reported



BOSTOCK'S WILD ANIMAL CIRCUS and "BILL CODY RANCH" WILD WEST

that two new trucks were purchased and that bodies for them were being made.

The good business the show had enjoyed continued on into New York. Three performances were given in Schenectady on July 6. The July 9 *Billboard* carried a number of items from the show. There was a full night house at Port Chester on June 7 and the next day at Yonkers, with American Legion auspices, there was another good house. W. N. Linabury wrote that he caught Main at Peekskill on June 30 on a lot three miles out of town. He said that Slim Walker worked the lion act and had charge of the elephants and other animals. Everett Blanahan reported two good houses in Newburg on July 1. Just after the show started a heavy rain and windstorm came up and kept the canvas men busy for a while for fear of a blow-down. The wind let up after a while but rain continued until after midnight. The show did big business at both performances on July 2 at Kingston, Blanahan's home town.

The big news about the change of title was published in a major article in the July 23 *Billboard*. The Main show title had been changed to Bostock's Wild Animal Circus. The Cody Wild West was retained. The Bostock show made its initial appearance at Ithaca, New York on July 11. The fairgrounds lot was used and the show made an excellent impression. The big top was still a 100 with three 40s, as the new canvas had not arrived. The article advised that special paper was used

This Kelty photo of the Bostock personnel was taken in Yonkers, New York on June 28, 1932. James Heron is eighth from left in the front row. Tom Gorman is at his right. Roger Boyd, Sr. collection.

and that the billing had been extensive. Also carried was a brief history of the Bostock title reading: "Bostock's Wild Animal Circus has a unique and interesting history. For more than 125 years it was the favorite show of Great Britain. It was carried on for more than half a century by Frank Bostock, called the Barnum of England, who retired from active management in 1931. The American Bostock Circus was founded by Frank C. Bostock, brother of E. H. Bostock and for many years was well and favorably known in the United States. Frank Bostock died sev-

eral years earlier, and he was succeeded by his son Claude.

"Bostock's Wild Animal Circus had had a modest origin in two boa constrictors bought by George Wombwell. From the exhibition of snakes a circus was established, which included the first giraffe ever brought to Great Britain. The mother of E. H. Bostock was a niece of Wombwell's. E. H. Bostock was born in Stony Stratford, Buckinghamshire on October 19, 1858. He left school in 1870 and joined his parents who were then touring Southern Ireland with the show. In a few months, although only twelve, he became a utility man, while his brother became an

The 1932 Bostock letterhead was printed in brown on a yellow background. Pfening Archives.





advance man. In February 1889 he bought the show from his mother and started out on his own. At that time he already had two other shows on the road."

Doc Oyler was still running the side show. A report said that James Shropshire, who gave up the job because of illness, had spent thirty-three days in a Fall River, Massachusetts hospital after a minor operation, his second in a year. Shropshire was now up and about but still hobbling around.

The Bostock show went into Pennsylvania on July 12 at Scranton, then played Wilkes-Barre, Lehighton, and Stroudsburg before moving on to New Jersey, with first stand coming at Red Bank on July 18.

There were several *Billboard* reports as the show moved through New York and Pennsylvania. The new big top arrived during this time but the exact date and stand of its first use was not given. The 120 with three 40s big top was as large as any in used by a motorized show. Some of the reports published said that J. C. Admire closed with Barnett Bros. at Dover, Delaware and had joined the Bostock Circus as special contracting agent. Prof. W. B. Leonard caught the Bostock show at

Midway pit show that housed Bill Cody's horses on September 8 in Parsons, Kansas. The ticket wagon at left carried the Cody Ranch Wild West title. Joe Bradbury collection.

Endicott, New York and met with his old friends Buchanan, Heron, Main and wife. He said the show had been doing nice business. Also on hand at Endicott was Fred T. Slater who advised there was fair attendance at the matinee and a good night house. It was reported that Jerome Harriman, the show's general agent, had booked Richmond, Virginia for July 29 using the Boulevard and Broad lot. This lot had been used for several years. Nearly all of the Broad Street footage now had buildings but still there is enough room in rear of the structures for an average size circus like Bostock. The lot used to cost \$100 until addition of the new buildings three years previous. The cost was now \$50. The show was booked to play Charleston, West Virginia on August 8. Sam B. Dill's Circus had been there

Three of the Main semi-trailer cages in Parsons, Kansas. Joe Bradbury collection.

a couple weeks before. Walter Smith joined Bostock to take charge of properties. He had been on Buchanan's Robbins Bros. in 1931.

The *Billboard* said the show had a real play in Scranton, Pennsylvania on July 13 with capacity in the afternoon and straw at night. The side show also had a good day. Popular price of 25 cents for big show was advertised very heavily on street cars. Reserves were 25 cents, after show concert, 10 cents and side show 15 cents. Rolling stock was in fine shape and well painted. All canvas was new except the side show. The front doormen were dressed in white, prop men uniformed in red with name Bostock and Cody Ranch Wild West lettered on back. There was nothing around the show carrying the Main title by this time. Other items said the show had received a new light plant truck in Scranton and James Shropshire was back in harness again and had the side show, replacing Doc Oyler who had left July 11.

The side show was a strong part of Main in 1932. Roger Boyd says that at one time during the season they had an ace attraction, Lentini the three legged man. Boyd also well remembers W. J. Allen in the side show. Allen had found the body of the kidnapped Lindberg baby. Boyd recalled that Allen was asked if he received the \$10,000 reward which had been posted for recovery of the child. Allen replied, "no sir, if I had, I sure wouldn't be with this here Bostock circus."

The *Billboard* carried a story saying Boyd worked the goat act in the Main performance, but when questioned on this, he said someone sent that in as a joke. He brought the goats into the ring but they were worked by Lawrence Cross, one of the clowns. Boyd said his first experience actually working an animal act wasn't until 1933 when he presented Nemo in the performance.

After the return to New Jersey the show also played Asbury Park, Montclair, Dover, Somerville, and Trenton. Afterwards one more Pennsylvania date came at Chester on July 25, then the route headed southward with stands at Wilmington, Delaware; Annapolis, Maryland, and July 28 Fredericksburg, Virginia. Six more dates in the Old Dominion followed and with them heavy opposition.

As the show began its southern tour there were changes in the advance department. Both general agent Jerome Harriman and Vernon Reaver, who had joined sometime earlier, left and returned to their homes. Coming on were James Hervey and James Admire, both termed contracting agents in the spring. J. J. Erickson was manager of advertising cars

and Fletcher Smith remained as head of advance press.

The first August *Billboard* "Hartman's Weekly Broadcast" column remarked, "They say the Bostock Wild Animal Circus sure looks prosperous with new canvas, big top was a 120 with three 40s and full of seats not 'mebbe.' [A term Hartman often used to contrast fact and fiction.] Patrons have to go in the reserves when there is no room to stand or sit on the ground. Show was getting 25 cents in the big spots."

Another story said that four employees of Bostock had been hurt when a truck ran off the road, one seriously, when a canvas truck was involved in an accident at the intersection of Defense and Crane Highways in Annapolis, Maryland on July 28 enroute to Fredricksburg. The truck ran across Crane Highway instead of making a left turn and crashed through trees down an embankment. A heavily loaded trailer rolled up on the cab and one man was pinned beneath the load. Directly behind the truck was a cage containing six lions, including a mother and two cubs born the night before, but it made the left turn safely.

A final item noted that Snyder Bros. Circus, which had been in competition with the Bostock show when it was still under the Walter L. Main moniker in New England, had called it a season and returned to its quarters at Red Creek Flying Field in Auburn, New York after slow business. That show's second season had opened in Auburn on May 7, and toured through New York, Connecticut, and other New England states. After a poor take in Plattsburg, New York it was decided to end the season.

Circuses were plentiful in Virginia when Bostock arrived. Downie Bros. and Sam B. Dill were there but the toughest and closest opposition came from the thirty car Sells-Floto show which had added the John Robinson title for its southern tour, the Robinson name a strong draw in Dixieland. Bostock and Sells-Floto both played Richmond, Newport News, and

Norfolk. Bostock came in about two weeks ahead of the larger show. Bostock played Richmond July 29 with Floto in on August 17; Newport News on July 30, with Floto August 16; and Norfolk on August 1, with the railer in on August 15.

It appears business started dropping at this time and with it coverage in the trade publication as is usually the case. No mention was made of Bostock's business at other Virginia stands at Petersburg, Farmville, Lynchburg and Roanoke. The show moved into West Virginia at Bluefield on August 6 and following a Sunday run played Charleston on August 8 which gave a fairly good matinee crowd. It was reported that the show had made arrangements to winter at the Kanawha Exposition and state 4-H fairgrounds in Charleston.

An interesting *Billboard* story toward the end of August mentioned that J. H. (Doc) Oyler, formerly with Hunt's Circus and Walter L. Main earlier in the season, had made the "talkies."

A Fox Movietone short subject entitled *Here Comes The Circus* featured Doc making one of his side show announcements. The picture, a composite of shots from several circuses, was being shown in theaters. It illustrated the circus from posting of the first bills to the conclusion of a performance.

Roger Boyd well remembers when the film was taken in 1932. Most of it was on the Walter L. Main show in New England. Boyd is responsible for the film being available today.

The film was in sound when Boyd obtained the only known copy some years ago. Because it had been improperly stored moisture had ruined the sound track. But fortunately the images were still clear. Boyd marketed 8mm film copies in the early 1970s. It is a remarkable historical reminder of the 1932 Walter L.

Complete layout of the Walter L. Main Circus at Parsons, Kansas. The tents left to right are: the 120 foot big top, a four pole menagerie and a 3 pole side show. Joe Bradbury collection.

Main show. The film is available in videotape on Nostalgia No. 2 from Mike Martin's Circus Hobby Hall.

The film begins with the posting of bills for the Walter L. Main and Cody Wild West. Then the early style semis arrive on the lot and are unloaded to begin the set-up. Joe Hodgini is shown unloading his horses. There are the usual shots of the stake gang in action and the cookhouse. The morning street parade comes next and these scenes did not fit with the earlier Main footage. It was known that Main didn't parade in 1932 and it was thought that perhaps a special march was made, but Boyd said he didn't remember any.

After close examination it was noted the parade was Barnett Bros. One truck in particular was identical to still photos of Barnett that season. After the parade came the center ring concert and the performance. The spec began, most of it Main, but then suddenly there are massive floats and a long line of elephants and it's apparent these scenes are from Ringling-Barnum. A few other scenes show the interior of the large Ringling-Barnum big top. But most of the performance is of Main, the lion act with four or five animals, and even the goat act. The midway is fully shown with the side show banner line and Doc Oyler making an opening. Boyd said the film was shot by the same man who worked with Martin and Osa Johnson on their popular animal adventure movies of this period.

The hot summer days of August arrived and with them came even the hotter presidential campaign between Herbert Hoover, the Republican candidate running for a second term, and the Democrat's Franklin D. Roosevelt, the New York governor. Hoover had been blamed for the depression, an issue which would still be talked about in political campaigns fifty years later. Old circus men always claimed presidential election years meant poor business for circuses. They would cite as examples 1912 and 1916, but overlooked 1920, a very fine circus year. In time it would be noted that 1932



was a very poor season, however, with the great depression at its worst, it is doubtful that the Hoover-Roosevelt race had any effect on the poor overall take of virtually all shows that season. Some like Main-Bostock would strike it big for short periods.

After another West Virginia stand at Parkersburg the show played Marietta, Ohio, returned to West Virginia for Wheeling and then moved back for more Ohio stands at Cambridge, Newark, Dayton, and Middletown.

The show headed into Kentucky at Covington on August 17 and remained in the Blue Grass state for additional dates at Maysville, Lexington, and Frankfort.

When the show was in the Cincinnati area the *Billboard* sent a reporter to review it. His extensive coverage appeared in the August 27 issue and read: "Covington good for Bostock. Good matinee, on straw at night, new tops make very attractive appearance.

"Cincinnati, August 20. Bostock Circus and Bill Cody Ranch Wild West made its first appearance in this section Wednesday, at Covington, Kentucky, in the Covington ball park. The matinee was favored by ideal weather resulting in a two-thirds house. About 6 p. m. a heavy shower of rain occurred, but the weather soon cleared and for the night performance both reserves and blues were packed to overflowing. In both ends people were seated on straw about twenty feet into the track.

"The new big top, a 120 foot round top with three 40s, with 30 x 30 marquee, and new menagerie top, a 60 with four 30s, made a very attractive appearance. Approximately 75 units of rolling stock, including equipment carriers, animal cages, etc. and house cars and automobiles. A number of the units were tableau, with scenic productions on sides. Side show tent, 60 with two 30s; Bill Cody horses (individual attraction), 30 x 40; dressing room 50 with two 30s; cookhouse, 40 x 80. Performance presented in and over two curbed rings and center space for arena, also on hippodrome track.

"Show recently reduced admission prices. Here the general admission charge was 25 cents and the same amount for reserves; 10 cents for side show and the same for concert. Pit show with Cody's horses, a dime. Merchant ticket plan has been restored—10 cents and a ticket admits one.

"Lineup in menagerie included two elephants, six camels, baby camel, dromedary, lions, including, two white cubs; hyena and a number of other cage animals. The cages are long semi-trailer units.

"A pleasing program is presented under direction of Bert Wallace who kept

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Uptown Ticket Office at Huber's City Drug Store—Circus Day Only

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Have a Limited Number of
FREE TICKETS
For their patrons. Call at their store for information.

Newspaper ad used by Main in Vernon, Texas. Merchant ticket plan listed at bottom. Joe Bradbury collection.

the various displays moving in quick order. Announcing of acts is done by Doc Young. While the show had no big outstanding features, numerous turns drew heavy applause, particularly those of Walter Powell, Miss Callahan and Ray Gaudet, and two specs, Mother Goose in Fairyland, opening, and America, closing. Both well staffed, especially the patriotic number. The elephant ride, in which girls and boys are invited to take a little trip on Jap, monster pachyderm, rather novel, and made a big hit. Bill Cody made several appearances during big show program, riding around the track. Capt. Slim Walker also received a big hand with his trained lions.

"The program, following the spec and Cody announcement: No. 1 ponies and riding dogs, presented by Charles Jones and Doc Young. No. 2 Elephants. Jap, presented by Bert, and Nemo, by Jeanette Wallace. Clever routines. No. 3 Capt. Slim Walker puts four lions thru an interesting routine in a steel arena. Act would show to better advantage if arena was larger. No. 4 Gaudet, Callahan and Harris,

on single traps. Clown walk-around. No. 5 Six dogs, worked by Mrs. Wallace; three ponies, Bert Wallace, and five goats, Lawrence Cross. Wild west announcement. No. 6 Ray Gaudet, Nick Gallucci and Walter Powell, on tight wire, a very good number. Last named is featured in center ring; works without umbrella and does a flip-flap and back somersault. No. 7 Pony Express; the rider is Marion Stanley. No. 8 Niquette Sisters perform very creditably in their cloud swings. Clown walk-around. No. 9 Ruby Williams and Niquette Sisters on swinging ladders. Very good. No. 10 Menage horses put through their paces by Mr. and Mrs. Bert Wallace. Miss Callahan on Spanish web, a clever performer; does arm and leg planges, also contortion feats. Wild west announcement. No. 11 Unusual iron-jaw routine by Niquette Sisters and Miss Harris. No. 12 High-jumping horses, by Jack Hughes and his company of riders. Ray Gaudet does a neat foot slide (backward) from top of tent. No. 13 Bert Wallace offers the elephant ride. Finale was the spec America.

"Clown numbers were presented by Gene Lewis, Lawrence Cross, Lou Walton, John Ardell, Howard Hall and Al Powell.

"The band; P. H. (Red) Payne, leader and baritone; Leon Darrow and Tommy Osborne, cornets; William Stein and Joe Pomolis, clarinets; John T. Kyle, French horn; Norman and William Stanley, baritones; Verdi Hilton, trombone; Thomas Zacco, sousaphone; Craig Ferguson, bass drum; Frankie Oppie, snare drum; Bud Geiss, calliope.

"Concert: Both matinee and night heavy percentage of big show attendance, and very good Wild West program. Besides appearance of Bill Cody, performers included Jack Hughes (informed he was leaving for Florida home), trick riding; Jackie Hughes, juvenile entertainer; Cecil Tatum, bronk and trick riding; Josephine Tatum, trick riding and featured horse roping; and Bill Gonzales, clown. Doc Young presented 'Cupid,' masterly trained pick-out pony in an excellent routine, into which number Bill Cody injected extemporaneous witty sayings.

"In the annex, managed by James Shropshire, Don Taylor, assistant, are the following attractions: Madam Elizabeth, mentalist; Don Taylor, lecturer and ventriloquist, also doing Punch; Al Howe and dancers; Prof. White's 14 piece vaude and minstrels; Vivian Johnson and Ruth Henderson, soubrettes; Cuban Mack, human ostrich and novelty act; Princess Viola, snakes; Princess Mary, midget; Red Cloud, tattoo; Dan Robey, Scotch band; Willie Bowlegs and company, impalement act; J. C. McBride and R. Smith, ticket sellers; Fred Sanders, front door.

"Mrs. James Heron is in charge of candy and eating stand concessions."

At some point during the season prior to this review P. H. (Red) Payne had replaced Bert Proctor as band leader. Payne had been in charge of the Robbins Bros. band in 1931, filling in for long time Buchanan show band leader, O. L. Gilson who was ill that season.

About the time the show played Covington, possibly a week or so before, the merchant ticket plan was restored, and Honest Bill Jr. returned to handle the advance ticket tie-up with merchants. He left Lewis Bros. at Toledo, Ohio to come back to Bostock. Although the show had used the plan in 1931 and possibly earlier in the current season it had later been abandoned. Now when business had slowed down it was felt the marketing ploy was necessary to keep going.

The *Billboard* reported that show suffered another truck accident on August 12 when en route from Wheeling, West Virginia to Cambridge, Ohio. A heavy baggage truck turned over on a hill near Cambridge pinning six men beneath it. All of them were injured, three seriously. The caravan came to a stop and one truck swerving to prevent a collision with the vehicle in front toppled to its side. Eight men were aboard.

The show went into Indiana at Bloomington and the following day played Terre Haute. The September 3 *Billboard* reported the show had a big day at its first appearance in Terre Haute on August 23. Two matinee and two evening performances were given. The first afternoon show was a runaway and had them sitting on the straw. There was a duplication at night. A chain grocery in the merchants ticket plan secured 15,000 tickets to give customers with purchases of a stipulated minimum amount. James Shropshire's side show had very big business. Bill Cody made personal appearances in the performance and the concert after the night shows drew heavily. The article noted that Lou Walton and Lawrence Cross closed at Terre Haute to play fair dates. Also leaving recently were Chuck and Minnie Gooden. He was 24 hour man and she was vocalist. It was mentioned that William Newton Jr. and Fletcher Smith were on the second advance of



The Main show used this stock Erie lithograph in 1932. Circus World Museum collection.

the show. A final note said that two white baby lions were a novelty in the menagerie.

It appears that Terre Haute was one of the last good stands of the season, at least few others were mentioned in the trade press. The show then went into Illinois to play Mattoon, Decatur, Jacksonville, and Pittsfield. On August 29 it was in Missouri at Moberly, followed by Columbia, Marshall, Clinton, and Nevada, then moved over into Kansas at Pittsburg on September 3. One more Missouri stand came at Joplin, then more Kansas dates at Ft. Scott, Chanute, Parsons, and Coffeyville.

The September 10 *Billboard* reported that L. V. Brown had joined James Shropshire in the side show as ticket seller and talker. An interesting note stated the show was no longer using the Bostock name but had gone back to the Main title.

Another Erie stock bill used by the Main show in 1932. Circus World Museum collection.



The exact date of the change was not given but the article mentioned the show had been in Missouri the prior week so it would have been in that state or in Kansas. Business had decreased so much it was felt the Bostock title was not known by the natives and the Main title would draw better. Fletcher Smith finished his advance press duties in Joplin, Missouri after handling the stand scheduled for September 5 and left the show.

In the latter part of September the *Billboard* said that the show had a capacity

crowd at night in Coffeyville, Kansas, September 9. The matinee was also good. On the day before at Parsons the take was light, but it was noted the tour generally had been successful in this section, which was no doubt somewhat stretching the truth. Other notes said that J. R. Hervey, advance man was ill with influenza and Walter L. Main had relieved him during his illness. Two lions were born enroute from Joplin but only one survived. The biggest news in the report was that the title of Cody Ranch Wild West was to be dropped from the Main title on September 27 when Bill Cody was to return to Hollywood to make a series of pictures for Universal. However a wild west unit was to be retained.

At some stands in this territory it was reported that the show used only the Cody Ranch Wild West name. Possibly that was the case at the stand where some of the photos printed here were taken. The Cody title appears on the ticket wagon in one photo.

The show next began a tour of Oklahoma. Bartlesville played on September 10 was the initial stand and was followed by Muskogee, Okmulgee, Shawnee, Guthrie, Watonga, Clinton, Mangum, Altus, and Frederick. The route then took the show to Texas for Vernon, Quanah, and Electra.

Frank (Doc) Stuart of Oklahoma City often wrote a column for *Billboard* called "Sawdust" and many of them were quite humorous such as one he had in the October 1 issue. He said about four weeks earlier he received a wire from Fred Buchanan of Bostock, or Cody Ranch Circus, or Walter L. Main, or Robbins Bros. (possibly that moniker even came out at one stand) which asked him

to wire immediately the conditions in Oklahoma. Old Buch concluded his wire by saying "will see you in my cookhouse." Stuart wired back, "Oklahoma conditions great due to cotton price advance. Crops great, weather greater, and feeling greatest since depression. Nothing ahead of you and nothing back. Glad you mentioned cookhouse but do not change menu. I eat anything but watermelon." Stuart continued his column by saying that "well, the next day it rained, not real rain, but circuses, Ringling-Barnum, Harrington's Nickle Plate, Seal Bros., Russell Bros, and Gentry Bros. On September 15 the Main circus came to Guthrie. I was run out of the cookhouse and told to go into the big top to look for the audience but I couldn't find any audience. This has been the condition of shows for the last six weeks in the afternoon but night shows have been packed, jammed, and strawed."

After Electra, Texas on September 24 the show was scheduled to play Gainesville on the 25th, but never made it. At Electra the show was cut down to a one ring big top, storing two middle pieces and ten trucks of paraphernalia there. A number of executives and performers arrived in Gainesville on September 25th where the show was to exhibit the following day. Some registered at local hotels, while others parked on the lots and set up small sleeping tents. The caravan of trucks carrying the show property was delayed by slick and muddy roads between Henrietta and Gainesville and did not arrive on Sunday. The group left Gainesville for Ryan, Oklahoma and the trucks enroute were ordered to retrace their route and cross the Red River back into Oklahoma.

The *Billboard* said that announcements were made in Ryan during the day on the streets for the one performance given there. The tent was well filled according to Robert Hughes, a local newspaperman. The show had originally billed Clarksville, Texas for September 27 and was to move from there into Arkansas, but after the "wild-cat" date in Ryan it was decided to continue in Oklahoma and not return to Texas all.

However the end had come for the show that season. It played only one more stand at Duncan, Oklahoma on September 28, then closed out the 1932 tour there. From



A three den cage semi-trailer in Parsons, Kansas. Joe Bradbury collection.

Duncan the show, all of its equipment and personnel, moved to the Montgomery Fairgrounds in Coffeyville, Kansas and set up temporary quarters. Confusion then set in for the next several weeks. Heron left the show, leaving the equipment and people stranded there.

The October 15 *Billboard* said the Walter L. Main Circus had some sort of mix-up at the end of the season. A letter from F. B. Hanlon, a Coffeyville, Kansas attorney, advised that on September 30 Heron brought his show into Coffeyville to winter and that same night departed for parts unknown, leaving employees, performers, and musicians, as well as animals and live stock without food, water, funds, or visible means of support, owing salaries for about five weeks. By October 7 Heron had failed to return or make any effort to liquidate the claims. The court assuming he would not, issued a warrant for his arrest as a fugitive from justice and likewise for bringing paupers into the state.

A week later the *Billboard* said that Main people and stock of the show seem to be contented and were pulling together trying to adjust matters to have the outfit on the road the next season.

The October 29 *Billboard*, again quoting

The Main canvas semi-trailer on the lot in Parsons, Kansas, September 8, 1932. Joe Bradbury collection.



an unnamed party, said that in a report from Coffeyville, Kansas it was stated there was no arrest warrant out for Heron. It was further stated that the ten performing animal acts of the show were being booked and some were already working. The feed, grocery, and other bills had been paid in full. The piece concluded by stating that Heron's friends on the show were

not hostile to him.

Roger Boyd well remembers being stranded in Coffeyville. He said the show moved there with no word from anyone and was left there. Boyd recalls that Walter Johnson, a famous baseball player, lived nearby and it was Johnson who provided the personnel with food during the time they were in Coffeyville.

Finally the Coffeyville situation ended. The November 5 *Billboard* said the William P. Royer, president of the Montgomery Fair Association, stated that the Main show had left Coffeyville for Charleston, West Virginia. The move was made possible through the efforts of Walter L. Main and William Newton, Jr. All accounts in Coffeyville had been paid in full. *Billboard* noted arrangements had been made earlier to winter the show in Charleston.

The next week *Billboard* reported that William Newton Jr., one of the owners of the former Main show, had announced the outfit was now quartered for the winter at the Charleston 4-H Fairgrounds near Dunbar. He said the show was to use the Newton Bros. title the following season. Some forty trucks brought the animals and equipment from Coffeyville, Kansas to begin work for its tour next spring. Newton said it was expected to give several exhibitions to benefit the poor in the city and county. It was mentioned that Newton's elephant Jap had recently worked several Republican rallies in Mercer County, West Virginia. A final note said that Roger Boyd had returned to his home in Front Royal, Virginia.

Newton's claim that the show would henceforth would use his name was a little premature. There was another major claim against the property other than his. The December 3 *Billboard* said there were two attachment suits against the Main show totalling \$16,000 which had been filed in the Kanawha County Circuit Court in

Charleston. Newton alleged approximately \$10,000 was due him from money loaned, professional services and balance on contract. Thomas Gorman of New York was suing for \$6,000. Plaintiffs were seeking attachment of the property of the Main show including all animals, vehicles and other equipment. Another item reported James Heron had booked his baby elephant Nemo at one of the leading department stores in Baltimore.

Two weeks later the court action was further clarified when it was reported that the two suits, one by Thomas Gorman, and one by William Newton Jr. against Walter L. Main, James Heron and Fred Buchanan had been filed. Newton had described the court move as necessary to clear the title of possession of the former Walter L. Main Circus.

Gorman in an affidavit accompanying his suit set a claim of \$8,850 covering alleged contract for services performed in connection with the operation of a circus property in quarters at the 4-H Fairgrounds in Charleston, West Virginia.

Newton, in his suit, asserted a claim of \$7110.75 on contract for services and labor performed at the request of the defendants in the operation of certain properties of the circus.

This was the way matters stood when the year came to a close. The court action continued into 1933 and was not to be settled until spring. It was May before it was decreed that Gorman could take possession of the show property and could go out again under the Walter L. Main title with Heron as manager. The story of the 1933 Main show appeared in the March-April 1989 *Bandwagon*.

There are several explanations for the failure of the show later in the season after such a promising start. It could have been due to the change of title but more probably the poor economic conditions in the territory played during the mid and latter part of the route. Walter L. Main presented a somewhat different theory in an article in the February-March 1939 *White Tops*. He said: "In 1932 I leased my title to a show which started off with a 100 foot round with three 40 foot middles. The title was Walter L. Main Circus and Bill Cody Wild West. The show put them on the straw five nights the first week, but they would not leave well enough alone and ordered a new 120 top with the same performance and there were plenty of complaints which prove that when you enlarge your tent you must enlarge your entertainment. That fall they elected to

not use my name, thought it was not well known, they painted the Main name off the trucks and used the title of Bostock, and what a flop that was. They left two middle pieces in Texas and finished with one ring, and next spring they went out with one ring and featured Tarzan and pleased the folks. Tarzan was about all they had, the rest of the show was cheap. Finally some brilliant mind told them to send to Texas and get those two middles, and then Tarzan could hardly be seen in the center of the big top. I happened to be with the show and they had every available person but they could not hold them on the end seats, they all stampeded for the center ring and once there was a riot. That season they eliminated Bostock and used Main again and profited by their experience. Tarzan was a man in a monkey suit and we heard the citizens after the show betting on whether it was a man or monkey."

The author would like to sincerely thank those who helped in the preparation of this article, Roger Boyd, Sr. for his personal recollections; Don Marcks for providing his father's notes on the show; and the Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wisconsin for the season routes and other information.



A Circus Parade Extravaganza

The Great Circus Street Parade in Pictures, by Charles P. Fox and Beverly Kelley. 1990. The authors re-create the circus parade during its golden age, bringing back one of the most joyous parts of this American Heritage. An updated version of this 1978 book. 136 pages. Softcover. 180 photos, including 10 in color. \$9.95.

The Great Circus Parade, by Herbert Clement & Dominique Jando. 1989. Detailed coverage of the 1987 Great Milwaukee Circus Parade, including the circus train trip from Baraboo from Milwaukee. Includes 200 beautiful color photos by Tom Nebbia, photographer for the *National Geographic*. 112 pages. Hardcover. \$17.95.

The Great Circus Parade Video. A 90 minute VHS video of the 1989 Great Milwaukee Circus Parade, hosted by Bob Keeshan (Captain Kangaroo) and Joe Smith. Includes the Two Hemispheres Bandwagon pulled by the 40 horse hitch driven by Paul Sparrow. \$29.95.

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Please add \$3.00 for the first book (or video), and \$1.00 for additional books (or videos) for shipping and handling. Send to:

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CIRCUS LIFE AND ADVENTURE OF ADAM BARDY

Every so often, story books are written that tell of someone who has lived an interesting and adventurous life, and there are times that some local person may come along who has experienced such an adventure in his life's journey. Of local interest is the story of Adam Bardy, who began his "adventure" in 1915, at the age of 8, running away with the great Buffalo Bill Wild West Circus, when the Circus was playing in his home town of Webster, Mass.

This beginning adventure was of very short duration, as Adam met up with gypsy fortune tellers the very next day, and, in their generosity, they gave Adam trolley car fare money, and Adam returned home.

In Adam's teenage years, he lived with woodchoppers in shanties in the woods, and finally in a deserted farmhouse. At the age of 17, Adam joined the Ringling Bros. & Barnum and Bailey Circus. Other large and small circuses were to be Adam's life, until, in 1929, Adam met up with Kentucky Mountaineers, and the life of a bootlegger was to begin. A thrilling adventure as a big-time bootlegger was Adam's lot in life, until the Conn. State Police wiped out the operation. Adam escaped from custody, and a fugitive's existence lasting seven long years began. During this time, Adam learned all about fortune telling, a life he followed for many years. After those seven years, Adam gave up and turned himself in to the police. He went on to raising beautiful meat and show rabbits, and became New England's largest rabbit breeder. Then he went back to doing character readings, using palm readings and handwriting analysis by mail.

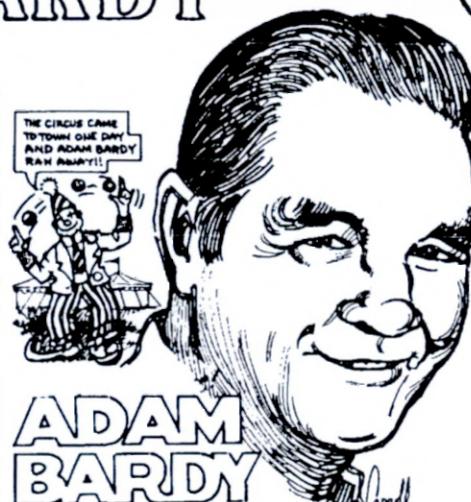
But, of all Adam's adventures, his memories of circus life were the best, including the opportunity to have had personal friends like the great Tom Mix, who joined the Sells Floto Circus when Adam was with that circus in 1929, and Adam's interest in boxing, which his good friend Tom Mix really loved.

And now, as Adam lives his quiet life out in the country, he has written an interesting book that tells of his 47 years with his wonderful late wife, Ann, who was a devoted and loving mate. The story tells of what it was like to live with a fugitive and bootlegger husband all those years, and then of her passing in 1980. Adam recounts his loneliness for three years. Adam continues his story by telling how the palmistry reading of a young 21-year-old girl blossomed into a wonderful friendship of true love and romance, as it can come to one who has lived an adventurous, interesting life. The story explains how, through deep faith in God, Adam could live this strange, unusual and interesting life, so full of excitement, and still remain the happy-go-lucky person he still is. Adam credits all this to the guiding hand of God.

The interesting life story of Adam includes that of his close companion, 22-year-old Terry Lyn Bates. Her story alone is well worth the price of the book, as one can see that age alone is not what counts, but the way we live our lives.

The book includes many pictures that tell the life story of Adam. For an autographed copy of "Circus Life and Adventure of Adam Bardy," send check or money order for \$12.95 to:

ADAM BARDY
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THOMPSON, CT 06277



ADAM BARDY

Ex-Circus Man, Ex-Pugilist,
Ex-Still Operator, Bootlegger,
Fortune Teller, And Author.



The charming city of Charleston, South Carolina was the site of the May 24-26 Circus Historical Society convention which was held during the opening week of the grand Spoleto Festival.

The Holiday Inn Riverview, on the banks of the Ashley River, gave participants a terrific view of the city, and easy access to the many restaurants and Spoleto activities which were available.

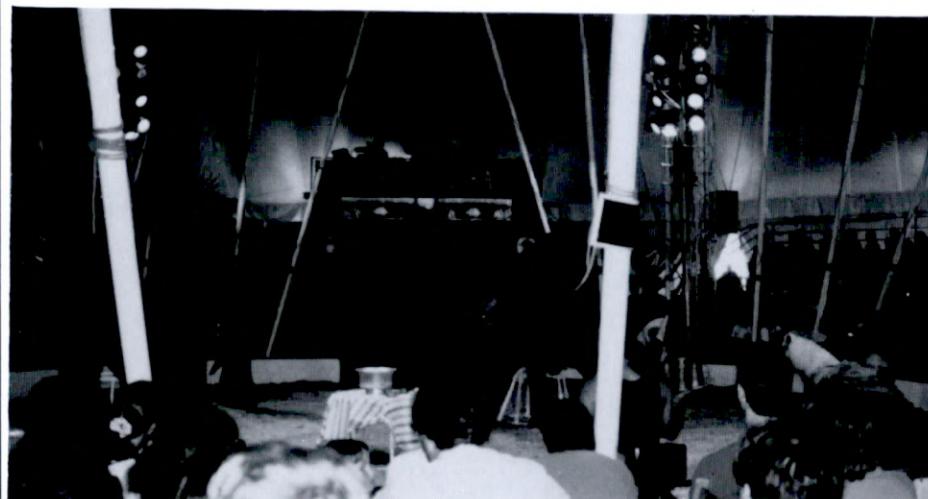
Registration opened in the evening of May 23, followed by a selection of vintage circus movies from the Circus World Museum and the Pfening Archives. The next morning the group traveled to the College of Charleston Conference Center for the historical session. After welcoming remarks by the CHS President John Polacsek which included a short look at the heritage of the organization, Stuart Thayer presented a paper on "The Out-Side Shows" which traced the development of the early side shows on circuses and menageries. Fred Dahlinger, Jr. followed with a slide show presentation on "Highlights of Calliope History."

The group then adjourned to visit Circus Flora which was setting up on Marion Square, just a block away. According to research by Stuart Thayer this historic circus lot is one of the oldest in the country still being used for performances under a tent. As early as 1848 the Raymond & Waring Menagerie played there as did the Mabie Circus in 1857, and the Yankee Robinson Show in 1859.

Through the courtesy of David Balding, director of Circus Flora, a guided tour of the show was arranged which was conducted by Hovey Burgess.

The group toured the backyard and

The Circus Flora elephant act. Fred Pfening photo.



1991 CHS CONVENTION REPORT

ample time was given for questions about the operation of the show.

After the tour the group dispersed to check out the local restaurants, afterwards meeting at the City Marina where an afternoon harbor cruise was taken on board the Charles Town Princess.

Later that evening a number of videos



Happy conventioneers Paul Ingrassia and Benny Kronberger on the Circus Flora lot. John Polacsek photo.

were shown at the hotel. The selection included a short c. 1910 Hagenbeck-Wallace parade and lot tape, and a half hour long on-the-spot production on the 1990 Carson & Barnes Circus flood. While the commentary was in Spanish, the group was able to get the feel of what the show went through on that terrible day at Houston, Pennsylvania. This was fol-

lowed by a selection of truck show videos from the 1950s and 1960s from the Frank Pouska collection.

The circiana auction was conducted Saturday morning with a variety of posters, books, photographs, and other delights being offered. Material for the auction was donated by many members in attendance, and from a number of others who could not make it. This event was a huge success, raising a bit over \$3000, all of which will be used for the *Bandwagon*.

That evening, fifty-five members and guests attended the banquet where speaker Ayres Davies recounted his experiences with school and tent circuses in the late 1940's. Kathryn Davies, his wife, added a special touch to the question and answer period afterwards, giving her perspective on the show's operation.

The next morning a special exhibition of circus posters was conducted by Ken Harck who went to great trouble to join the group on the last day. His vintage lithographs were a real treat for those in attendance, and included many rare bills.

The afternoon was spent—warm and dry—under the Circus Flora tent as it started to rain just as the show commenced. The performance was excellent and gave the members an opportunity to experience a one ring circus on a historic lot.

I would like to thank all those who helped to put on this year's convention and contributed to the circiana auction. John F. Polacsek.

Ken Harck displaying one of his lithographs. Fred Pfening photo.



1883 Forepaugh Posters Discovered in Vermont

By Gail S. Rosenberg
and Angela Patten

During a renovation of their Colchester, Vermont home, Gladys and Harold Degree heard cars screeching at the busy intersection near their house. The object of the motorists' interest was five intensely colored posters of the Great Forepaugh Museum, Menagerie, Triple Circus and Roman Hippodrome which were revealed for the first time in over a century when wood siding was removed from the house. The posters, each approximately 3 1/2 feet wide by 7 1/2 feet long, advertised Forepaugh's July 26, 1883 appearance in near-by Burlington.

One poster, printed by Russell Morgan and Company of Cincinnati, pictures a giant gorilla with fangs, holding a large bone, and looking as though it is about to throttle a Caucasian woman who is wearing Roman clothes and a Native American headdress. The bill posted above it il-

lustrates a herd of giraffes. To the right of the giraffe scene is another poster depicting "Little All Right, the Japanese Marvel" who performed both slack and tight rope, and made a "slide for life." Below it is Leonati, a famous bicyclist of the period, who is pictured on a poster printed by James Reilley of New York.

Half of another poster was revealed, with the bottom half still covered by a porch wall. It shows a woman with a snake around her neck. An article in the

The Russell Morgan giraffe poster. Photo by Ken Burris, Shelburne Museum.



Rutland Herald in 1883 gives her name as Nala Damajante, and says that she was reputed to be "the most wonderful manipulator of venomous reptiles ever seen in the new world."

The Forepaugh show received a glowing review in the July 27, 1883 *Burlington Daily Free Press and Times* which said it was "probably the honestest circus that ever visited this city. It gave all it advertised to give and gave it well. There is an evenness about the entire show that is unusual in such exhibitions. The quality Adam Forepaugh has without doubt the finest circus on the road to-day."

The review listed the prominent acts: Leonati's ascent and descent on the bi- Adam Forepaugh has without doubt the finest circus on the road to-day."

The Leonati bicycle act poster on lower right hand corner of building. Photo by Ken Burris, Shelburne Museum.



The review listed the prominent acts: Leonati's ascent and descent on the bi-of all the performances is high and the whole exhibition is a model one. . . . cycle, Miss Lillie Deacon's "very graceful riding," Adam Forepaugh Jr.'s herd of performing elephants, Jagendorfer in feats of strength, the Herbert brothers as "The Dancing Sprites" on double tight ropes, and ten "unusually daring and skillful" bareback riders.

About 10,000 Vermonters saw the show that day. "Great numbers of people from the surrounding countryside and from across the lake took advantage of the cheap excursion rates to attend. The three boats and all the trains reaching the city in the morning were crowded to overflowing," noted the Burlington paper.

On June 4-7 of this year a team of conservators, curators and interns from the Shelburne Museum removed four of the posters from the residence. Time was of the essence because the house was being resided with vinyl. The first day was spent experimenting with different ways of detaching the posters from the boards. It was found that some areas separated easily with a very thin spatula and the use of ethanol. One entire poster was removed in this manner as it was already fairly loose. This method proved to be too time consuming to continue and the group opted to remove the boards one by one, taking the board and paper at the same time. Working on 25 feet of scaffolding, the boards were removed and passed to other team members who cleaned the surfaces with special brushes, and labeled and pack-



The Japanese wire walker poster. A small portion of the poster underneath can be seen to left of hand with umbrella, Photo by Jym Wilson, Burlington *Free Press*.

aged the posters and boards in special wrapping for transportation to the museum.

According to Shelburne Museum conservator Valerie Reich Hunt, the intensity

of the colors on the posters indicates that they were covered by siding within weeks of the show's appearance and not exposed to light for 108 years. Structurally the paper is in poor condition with multiple rips, tears, nail holes with rust stains, missing pieces, mold, and creases. The dimensional movement of the wood planks caused the posters to tear at almost every board joint.

There are at least four other posters under the five Forepaugh ones, but until conservation work is done to remove all the paper from the plywood, the museum will not be able to identify them. A loose area on one of the Forepaugh posters shows two small election posters and another with a ballerina on horseback underneath. The slogan "Three shows combined," appears on the female equestrian bill.

The goal of conservation will not be to make the posters look new, but to stabilize them structurally for exhibit at the Shelburne Museum. After the posters have been cleaned and the ones underneath separated, they will be air dried. After flattening the bills, tear repairs and losses will be mended with Japanese tissue paper. Multiple fragments found at the site will be reattached to each poster. The posters will be reunited with the original wood boards with a special barrier paper and mounting system to protect them from the acidity and dimensional movement of the wood. Eventually the museum hopes to display them as they were found, as one artifact, the last remnant of that glorious day in 1883 when Forepaugh's bill crew posted Burlington and its environs.

GIRCUS PHOTOS - VOLUME 1 E. J. Kelty Originals

Reproduced from original 10" x 20" negatives in the Dunn-Tibbals Collection. Printed full size in black ink from 175 line halftones. 20 panoramic views, suitable for framing, packaged in handsome photo cover portfolio.

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CIRCUS PHOTOS

P. O. Box 553, Englewood, FL 34295-0553
(Make checks payable to Bob MacDougall)

Still Available ANNALS OF THE AMERICAN CIRCUS

Vol. II, 1830-1847

The salient history of the 158 circuses and menageries that toured America in this period. Included is the first attempt at a history of the famed Zoological Institute of 1835-1837.

This book consists of a 154 page narrative, a 205 page appendix (containing the routes, rosters and programs) and an index with over 500 names of managers, agents, band leaders and performers. It took seven years to research and it's yours for only \$30.00 postpaid.

Stuart Thayer
430 17th Avenue East
Seattle, WA 98112

An advertisement for the Caravan of Living Animals appeared in the Pensacola, Florida *Gazette* on November 21, 1829 states: "The keeper will enter the respective cages of the lion and lioness." This was the first recorded notice in the United States of man entering a lion den. The lions were a pair of the Asian species, and the man to have the initial honor was Charles Wright of Somers, New York. Four years later during the winter of 1833-34, in New York City, Isaac Van Amburgh made his debut in the lion's cage. He would surpass all others and achieved international recognition. Since then many have followed in his footsteps but few have been as successful.

In the heyday of the American circus, the roaring twenties, a talented trainer emerged named Frank Phillips. For many years he handled everything from leopards to elephants, yet he never became a center ring star. Ability and training skill are not a guarantee of fame.

Frank Phillips' full name was Francis Phillip Wholeben. He was born in Clarendon, Pennsylvania on April 4, 1908. His mother was a circus performer who was killed in the 1918 wreck of the Hagenbeck-Wallace show, the worst show train disaster in circus history. When he was sixteen Phillips joined the Walter L. Main Circus. He began as an assistant to the lion trainer Fritz Brunner. In 1925 he was with Chester Monahan's Gollmar Bros. Circus, working a small group of lions. This circus closed in June and he went to the Sells-Floto Circus where he performed with a wrestling bear, and worked on the elephant herd under Louis Reed.

In the spring of 1926 he journeyed to Havre De Grace, Maryland to join the Downie Bros. Circus where he presented an act with eight lioness. Nathan W. "Red" McKay a veteran elephant man,

Frank Phillips with a young Teddy on Downie Bros. Circus in 1926. Author's collection.



Asian elephant, Tena, in Carbondale, Pennsylvania. Babe was added to the herd soon after. The Downie show used a number of old trucks that first tour. Phillips drove the one that carried the lions, arena and the cage props. It caught fire almost every day and he was always late getting to the lot. Red McKay became ill while the show was in Virginia and had to leave the show. He died a short time later. Phillips took over the elephants and finished the season.

The show bought a new truck and he continued working the lions during the 1927 season. Eugene Scott had the elephants on the show. The 1927 Downie Bros. route book listed Phillips as superintendent of animals. Phillips had a one page ad in the route book. The copy read, "Capt. Frank Phillips, without fear of the largest beast the jungle produces. Positively the youngest

wild animal trainer in America, age 22."

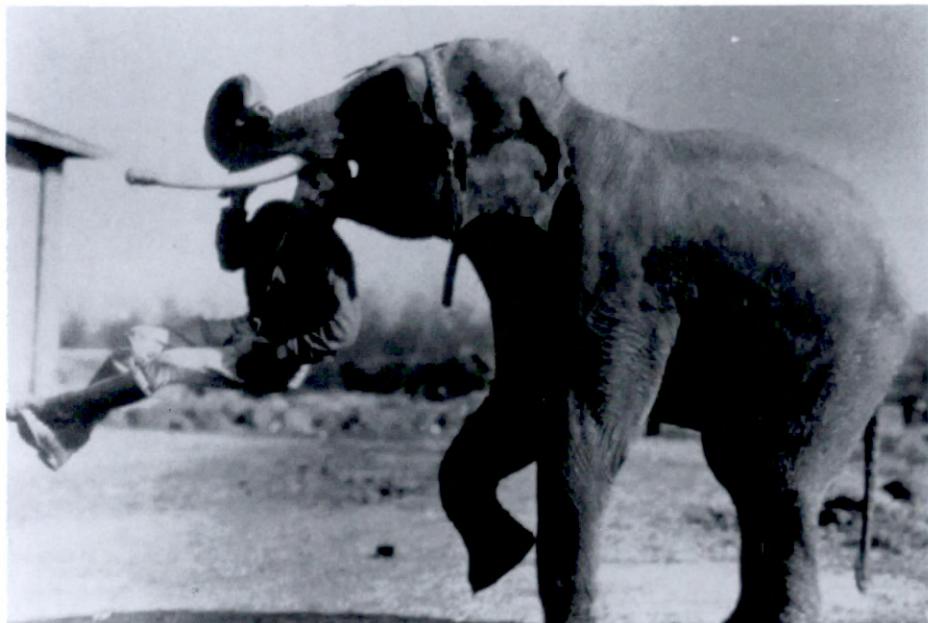
When the 1927 tour ended in Enfield, North Carolina on November 12 Andrew Downie purchased additional lions. One of these was sold to the Metro-Goldwyn-

**CIRCUS WILD
ANIMAL TRAINERS**

*Frank
Phillips*

BY BILL JOHNSON

came on to take over Teddy, the lone male Asian elephant. Teddy had been appearing with the Rose Midget Toy Town at the Hippodrome in New York. During the season the show acquired a female



Phillips doing a head carry with Teddy in 1930. Author's collection.

Mayo Studios in Hollywood, California and Phillips went with it. The lion large was a black-maned beast named Leo. Leo became the trademark for this studio. Phillips exhibited the lion for the MGM Studio in 1928 and part of 1929. He was back on Downie in 1928 for the summer tour where he presented two

arena acts, a mixed group and the lions.

Harriette Gilfoyle worked a cage full of leopards on Sparks Circus in 1929, remaining with Sparks following her husband Chubby's loss of an arm in an arena battle on May 25, 1928 in Syracuse, New York. Harriette left Sparks in Bedford, Indiana on September 9, 1929. Franz Woska had the large lion act on the show, but he did not take over the leopard act after Mrs. Gilfoyle left. Phillips joined the show to handle the seven spotted cats.

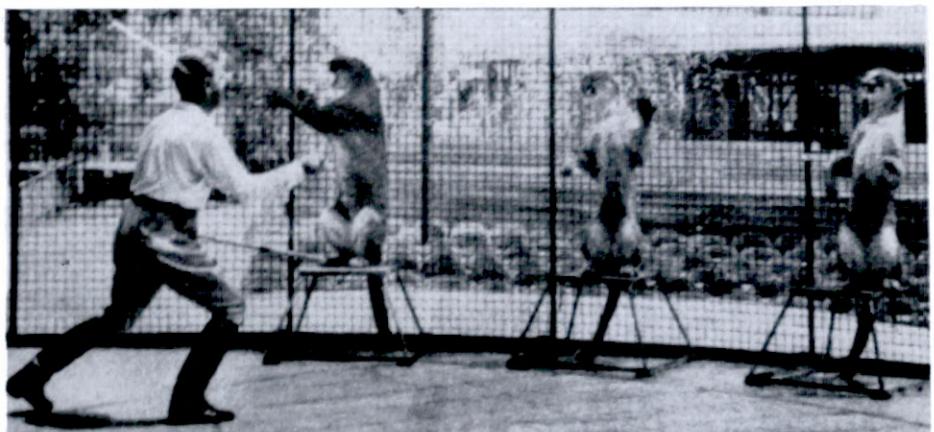
He was back on Sparks in 1930 presenting the leopards, but the season was a short one. The show closed early in October and Phillips rejoined the Downie Bros. at Charlottesville, Virginia, taking over the elephants Teddy, Tena and Babe.

Floyd and Howard King's ten car Cole Bros. Circus had a rough season in 1930, folding in Scottsville, Kentucky on August 12th. It carried three elephants Modoc, Pinto and Queen. Modoc was sold to the Ringling-Barnum Circus. Pinto and Queen went to the Ingraham-Rutherford Circus. This show never made it, so the two elephants were sold by the creditors to Charles Sparks. Dave Masten accompanied Pinto and Queen by baggage car from Peoria Illinois to Savannah, Georgia to join the Downie show. Phillips added the new recruits to the act. He was successful in training Teddy to do the head carry, a formidable stunt with a male elephant.

The Downie show finished their long season at Tifton, Georgia on December 29, 1930, then moved into winter quarters at Central City Park in Macon, Georgia. During the winter Phillips broke in Wallace as an untamable lion act for the side show. Tom Wilmeth worked this lion during the 1931 season. Unfortunately doing the head carry was too much. Phillips suffered a skull fracture and was forced to leave the show.

When he recovered from his head injury he found employment at the old Selig Zoo in Los Angeles. He spent the next few years training wild animals for motion pictures. During this period he doubled for many film stars when the script called for close contact with any wild animal. But it was back to the circus in 1936 working a tiger act with the E. K. Fernandez Circus on a tour of the Hawaiian Islands.

In 1938 Phillips took over the lion act that had been worked by Johnny Meyers in 1937 on the Al G. Barnes-Sells-Flojo Circus. Mabel Stark was also on this show. It was a disastrous year for many circuses. The Ringling-Barnum show was beset by union problems and called it quits in Scranton, Pennsylvania in June. Terrell Jacobs' big lion-tiger act, the feature on the Big One that year, was sent to



Phillips and a group of pumas at the World Jungle Compound. Author's collection.

the Barnes show after the Ringling closing.

Jacobs and other acts from Ringling joined the show at Redfield, South Dakota on July 11. The Stark tiger act was retained but Phillips' lion act was cut.

In 1942 and 1943 Phillips worked a male lion act at the John T. Benson wild animal farm in Hudson, New Hampshire. In 1945 he was with the Frank Wirth Circus. His career was on a down slide and in 1946 he worked an untamable lion act in the side show on Cole Bros. Circus..

Following the 1946 season, somewhat discouraged, he returned to California where he began a lengthy stay at the World Jungle Compound in Thousand Oaks. He joined old friends Billy Richards, ex-Selig manager, and the former Selig movie lion wrestling specialist Mel Koontz. A number of former circus trainers including Mabel Stark, Chubby and

Phillips and a Jungle Compound lion act at Summit Beach, Akron, Ohio. Pfenning Archives.



Harriette Gilfoyle and Albert Fleet worked at the compound. It was also a training ground for young big cage aspirants like Pat Anthony, the first to learn wild animal training under the G.I. Bill, and Chet Juszyk, the second to use the G.I. Bill.

Like the Selig Zoo, the World Jungle Compound supplied wild animals and trainers to the motion picture studios. Phillips was again working in front of the cameras doubling for stars. He was one of the trainers involved in handling the wild animals for the spectacular train wreck scene in Cecil B. DeMille's *The Greatest Show On Earth*. While not working motion picture jobs he performed with a group of male lions at the compound. These were beautiful animals, with full black manes. When Clyde Beatty saw them he was so impressed he bought five of them. The compound had amassed a large number of pumas or mountain lions. Phillips and Mel Koontz put together a performing group of pumas. The group eventually grew to fifteen with a black leopard as top mounter. In 1952 Phillips returned to Fernandez in the Hawaiian Islands with the puma act.

In 1953 Phillips was working on the picture *The River of No Return*, starring Marilyn Monroe and Robert Mitchum, at Twentieth Century Fox Studios. During one of the scenes he was severely injured while attempting to wrestle a puma. He never really recovered from this accident.

His final work was at the Pacific Ocean Park in California where he performed with elephants, bears and chimpanzees.

Like many of his fellow trainers in Thousand Oaks Phillips developed cancer. He suffered greatly during the final year of his life before dying in Thousand Oaks on January 2, 1963.

There were few like Clyde Beatty in the history of the circus, but many like Frank Phillips. He will be remembered by all of us who knew him for his congenial personality and training accomplishments.

My thanks to staff of Circus World Museum library for help on this article.

August 29 and September 5. Dominating the ad was a large engraving of a tiger which separated the two components of the title. At the top of the ad was, "HOWE'S GREAT LONDON RAILROAD SHOWS."

The rest of the title, "and BRITISH MENAGERIE," was directly below the tiger. The ad continued with, "Will Positively Exhibit at Olathe, Monday, Sept. 9th. Presenting at all times more than advertised and introducing an ultra-gorgeous array of pre-eminent performances, carefully collected, acceptably presented and proudly submitted to the public without fear of other than unanimous commendation. A quadruple exhibit in one old time ring. A show of exclusive and startling features. Absolutely original and marvelous novelties.

DOORS OPEN

AT 1 and 7 O'CLOCK P.M.

Performance One Hour Later!

"An unparalleled resplendent street parade, free to all, at 10 a.m. Open dens of rare beasts with trainers, in street parade. Free exhibition on show ground after Street Parade."

The *Patron* reported on September 12 that "Howe's Circus and Menagerie drew quite a crowd to Olathe last Monday. The ground was very wet, and an apparent apathy on the part of the performers made the exhibition rather a dull affair."

At Paola for the exhibitions of September 10 the title was altered to "Howe's Great London Railroad Shows, Sanger's British Menagerie and Pedro Lopez's Wild West." The tiger in the Olathe ad was replaced by a rhinoceros. For an unknown reason the ad commanded the public to,

"WAIT! WAIT!! WAIT!!!"

It was "The triumphant tour of the world's greatest shows. Male and Female Equestrians.

Comical Clowns. Queens of the Air.

Bareback Champions.

Glorious Gymnasts.

Performing Horses. Performing Donkeys.

Performing Mules. Performing Dogs.

Performing Goats.

Performing Monkeys.

Performing den of Asiatic Lions.

Heed no false announcements. Take warning in time. This great show will not change its date."

The *Miami Republican*, Paola, reported on September 13 that "Prof. Theo B. and Ed Long were with Howe's circus, which exhibited in Paola Tuesday [September 10]. Prof. Long furnishes the band for the circus, and has a good one, as usual. Ed plays in the band and 'hustles' the elephant's trunk. The boys are both fat as possums in wild grape time and we were all glad to see them."

According to the *Republican* the show

113TH ANNIVERSARY

CELEBRATION

TO BE HELD UNDER AUSPICES OF ENTERPRISE BAND AT

HADDAM, KASAS.

THURSDAY, JULY 4TH, 1889.

Program and Order of Exercises:

9:30 A. M. Procession will form at west part of town.
G. A. R. in uniform and all old Soldiers.
Haddam Enterprise Brass Band of fourteen pieces.
Mayor with Orators of the day in carriage.
38 little Girls dressed in white, on ornamented floats, representing States.
Merchants' trade display; Citizens and visitors in carriages and wagons.
10 A. M. Procession will march to our beautiful Park. Music by band.
Exercises of the day will be opened with prayer by Rev. Perry.
Vocal music. Opening address by Rev. Meek.
Oration by F. J. BASKERVILLE, Orator of the day.
Music by band. Dinner. The afternoon will be devoted to amusements, consisting of Fat Man's Race, Greased Pole Contest, Sack Race, a Premium to the Oldest Settler of Washington County, etc., etc.

THE AMERICAN CIRCUS

Will give a performance afternoon and evening including a Grand Free Exhibition in Rope Walking. They will also take part in the Parade.

FIRE WORKS!

One of the special features of the day will be a Grand Display of Fire Work in the evening grander than ever before witnessed in Northern Kansas, including

BALLOON ASCENTIONS

The American Circus advertised in the June 20, 1889 Haddam *Politician*. Kansas State Historical Society.

drew a large crowd to town and was well patronized. "The circus is a small one but gives a good entertainment, some of the features being the best we ever saw."

Paola city ordinance required the payment of \$50 license fee, but for an unknown reason the Howe's show paid only \$10 for the privilege.

At Pleasanton for the performances of September 11 the tiger was back, appearing in ad carried by the *Herald*. The Pleasanton *Observer* had a wart hog. The *Herald* advertisement mentioned "Lalla Rookh, the oldest and largest performing Elephant in America," thereby establishing a link with Howe's New London 25 Cent Show that appeared in Hiawatha, June 25.

The show booked Pleasanton for exhibitions during the run of the Linn county fair forcing the fair officials to alter their plans.

"Next Wednesday French's Show will be in Pleasanton," the *Herald* announced on September 6. "The officers of the fair have so arranged the programme for that day that all can visit the fair in the forenoon and enjoy the many attractions. Then take in the show until 3:30, when the racing will come off. In leaving gate to visit show, remember to get check so you can return and see the fine racing."

The accommodation offered by the fair board proved to be unnecessary as a week of heavy rains forced the cancellation of the fair. The circus also suffered from the rain as the *Observer* reported.

"Howe's London Railroad Show exhibited here Wednesday afternoon and evening. On account of the rain, which fell constantly until about noon, there was not a very large crowd and no parade was made. The performance was moderately good and it is only fair to suppose that it would have been much better had it not been for the inclemency of the weather."

For the stands at Girard, September 12, and Pittsburg, September 13, the Howe's name was abandoned, the show exhibiting under the title of "French's Railroad Shows, Hippodrome & Menagerie." Lalla Rookh was now Cleopatra, "The Oldest and Largest Performing Elephant in America." In advertisements the aggregation was "Universally Extolled as Wearing The Purple of Superiority."

The Girard paper made no mention of French's Railroad Shows following Circus Day.

The Pittsburg *Smelter* did not do much, but it did acknowledge the presence of a circus. "The bandwagon and 'Jumbo' had the usual guard of honor. Kids both white and black piloted the parade through the booming metropolis with all the dignity and enthusiasm that a board of trade committee shows a party of visiting capitalists."

A new show was born in 1889 in Haddam, Kansas, and was christened The American Circus. Reports on the show are scarce, but its season began in Haddam on the Fourth of July. "The 113th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence" was observed in Haddam with panache and aplomb. The Haddam *Politician* on June 27, published the "Program and Order of Exercises."

The parade was scheduled for 9:30 A. M. with the "G.A.R. in uniform and all old Soldiers" marching to the beat of the Haddam Enterprise Brass Band of fourteen pieces. The Mayor with "the Orator of the day" rode in an open carriage followed by all of the old soldiers. A feature of the procession was "38 little Girls dressed in white, on ornamented floats, representing States." Next came the "Merchants' trade display; and Citizens and visitors in carriages and wagons." Somewhere in the glittering stream was the American Circus whose contribution to the spectacle was totally undescribed.

The circus matinee had some sharp competition. F. J. Baskerville was orator of the day, followed by "the Fat Man's Race, Greased Pole Contest, Sack Race, a Premium to the Oldest Settler of Washington County, etc., etc."

The American Circus retaliated with a "Grand Free Exhibition in Rope Walking."

In the evening was a "Grand Display of Fire Works—grander than ever before witnessed in Northern Kansas, including BALLOON ASCENSIONS. And many other interesting specialities."

On July 11 the *Politician* reported, "The American Circus which showed here on the celebration grounds the 4th gave good satisfaction and did quite well financially. At both day and evening performances they had all they could seat. At the day performance many had to stand up."

The seats of the American Circus were made by Geo. W. Edwards and were a credit to that gentleman in every particular."

On July 18, the American Circus played Cuba without mention in the local press.

"The boys who were in Nebraska with the American circus are back talking re-submission," the *Politician* reported on August 8. "They claim there is no drunkenness up there, notwithstanding the fact that whiskey is as free as water at ten cents a glass."

The American Circus was an inspiration to all of the citizens of Haddam as the *Politician* related August 8.

"Since the organization of the American circus everything about Haddam possessed of life and activity has been trying to accomplish some feat which would insure a paying position in the great show. Nothing strange was thought of the boys practicing tight rope walking, contortion and tumbling but the climax was capped Tuesday night by Paul Swan's bay colt trying to walk the rail road bridge east of town. He succeeded in getting about half way across the 150 foot bridge all right when a foot slipped and he went down through the ties up to his body. He lay in this position till morning when he was found and helped out, being but slightly hurt. Fortunately no train came along that night. A wreck would have been a sure result."

The last word on the American Circus appeared in the *Politician* on Thursday, August 13. "The American circus pulled out for Blue Rapids Tuesday." It is not known if the American Circus ever arrived.

There came a show in 1889 about which the *Marshall County News*, Marysville on July 12 commented in a state of clairvoyance, "Judging from the advance delegation of Robbins' Circus, which is billed for Marysville July 19, it is a good show to stay away from." The opinion of the *News* was not strong enough to warrant rejection of the show's modest one-column ad.

"As Bright As Old Sol's Lustrous Glare,

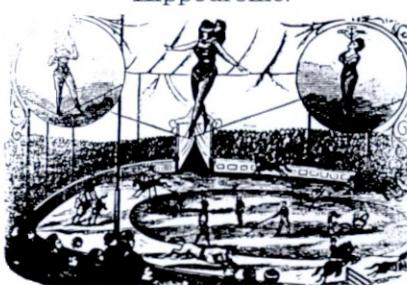
A Show of Priceless Worth.
A Veritable Great World's Fair.
The Grandest Show On Earth.

FRANK A. ROBBINS'
Gigantic and Sensational Realistic
WILD WEST
Hippodrome,
Circus, Menagerie,
Museum, Aviary and Aquarium.
Colossal Confederation
of Famous Features
From The American Institute
New York City
Will Exhibit at
Marysville Friday July 19."

The Robbins show made much of its claimed New York origin and the American Institute which purportedly was a permanent circus located on Third Avenue near Sixty-third Street in New York City. A handout in the *News* was claimed to be a quote from the New York *World* which, in speaking of Robbins' circus said, "And a very fine one it is! The animals in cages are a nice, fierce, well-fed,

This Robbins ad appeared in the *Manhattan Nationalist* on July 12, 1889. Kansas State Historical Society.

Frank A. Robbins Circus, Menagerie, Museum and Wild West Hippodrome.



MANHATTAN July 23
TUESDAY



\$25,000 Worth of Elephants.
50 LADY PERFORMERS. 50
100 Acrobats & Gymnasts. 100.
20 EQUESTRIAN ARTISTS 20.
PERFORMANCE AFTERNOON AND NIGHT.

well-kept exhibit. And in the two rings there is a remarkably fine display of performing animals.

"There are trained dogs, a leaping cat, trick donkeys with some of the funniest pranks, ponies that do amazing things, and a troupe of elephants that are really wonderful. These ponderous beasts have trained so perfectly that they executed a quadrille with a solemn precision that is at once marvelous and droll. Having gone through the figures of this dance they 'choose partners' and waltz in the giddiest fashion. They also have a military drill and perform an 'Anvil Chorus.'

"There is a notable performer, a contortionist, who calls himself Baggesen. He is a veritable human eel. Clad in shining scales of iridescent, flexible armor, he writhes about on the center stage, twists himself round like an animated corkscrew, sits on his own head and mixes up his anatomy in the most bewildering style.

"There's a woman with an iron jaw who does remarkable things while she hangs by her teeth and contrives to look very pretty meanwhile. The bareback riders and the trapeze artists are admirable. There are rope dancers and tight-wire performers who give the greatest satisfaction. About the whole performance and appointments of this circus there is an air of neatness that is quite unique in this kind of entertainment and should commend it strongly."

"Frank Robbins circus and his gang of gamblers, thugs and toughs have come and gone," the *News* reported on July 26. "They probably received the coolest reception which any circus ever received in Marysville. The *News* sized them up about right when it judged them from the advertising agent and told the people it was a good show to stay away from. The people took our advice generally, and stayed away. Owing to the good judgment of our city officials and particularly Marshal Grimes and assistant Marshal Auhl, the gambling part of the institution was not allowed to open up here at all but at Blue Rapids they got license to run any and all kinds of thieving games and aside from the money received for show tickets they stole about fifteen hundred dollars from the verdant denizens. The people of Marysville and vicinity can thank the newspapers and marshals of this city for preventing them from being robbed of hundreds of dollars, and yet there are business men in this city who have raved and danced and tore their hair about the newspapers keeping the crowd away from Marysville circus day and thus preventing these business (?) men from selling a nickels worth of crackers and ten cents worth of cheese. Some have even gone so far as to say that 'if we had an-

other newspaper or two in this city we might as well shut up our stores for they drive the trade out of the city.' Well somebody are making asses of themselves and we do not believe it is the newspaper men of the city. Possibly it is."

Prior to Circus Day the Blue Rapids *Times* ran a paragraph reporting that, "Robbins' circus and menagerie, billed for this place on Monday, July 22, travels by rail. They come here from Beatrice, Neb., and have a train of sixteen cars. We understand there are about 150 horses and 250 employees with the show. The ground selected for the tents is the ball ground between Main and Genesee streets."

A story in the *Times* following circus day related a sad tale.

"Frank A. Robbins' circus gave two performances at this place on Monday—quite a crowd of people coming in from the country in the afternoon. A heavy rain in the evening cut down the attendance at the second show. The collection of animals was rather slim, but they had a couple of well-trained elephants that helped out the show. The horsemanship, acrobatic and athletic feats, etc., were generally pronounced good, and the circus as a whole, a success. They arrived in town

early Sunday morning, but a very quiet day was spent. The one thing that marred the day on Monday was the presence of confidence men, who managed to squeeze the natives to a considerable amount, in one way and another. Uncle Andy Scott was a heavy sufferer. He became acquainted with a slick fellow representing himself as a cattle dealer who talked of buying Andy's farm, and said he was an old settler. The final outcome was the meeting of another friend, visiting a side-show and a trick of cards followed, in which Uncle Andy won \$1,000 which he was to have as soon he could show \$1,000 of his own. Andy secured the money, laid the \$1,000 down, and while his attention was called away for an instant, the money and the man disappeared, leaving him and his 'friend' alone. With promises of a return of the money, even if his friend had to pay it himself, he was kept quiet long enough to make all secure. The truth came too late. When men risk small

amounts in trying to get rich out of others, it is customary to say—"it serves them right.' But a loss like this by a hard-working, honest man like Uncle Andy Scott, while many will say he acted foolishly, all express their regret at his loss."

The Manhattan *Nationalist* on July 12 carried an unusually attractive ad for the Robbins show which claimed "\$25,000 Worth of Elephants; 50 Lady Performers 50; 100 Acrobats & Gymnasts 100; 20 Equestrian Artists 20," and on July 19, a handout describing the building of the American Institute.

"Opening performances given yesterday.—Two a day to follow.—The American Institute Building in Third avenue, near Sixty-third street, has been leased by Frank A. Robbins for a winter circus. Nothing which makes its summer counterpart so fascinating to the small boy, except the opportunity to crawl under the canvas and see the performance for nothing, is lacking. The opening of the circus took place yesterday afternoon. Ranged around the walls are the cages of the fierce wild beasts who are wont to entertain visitors with their jungle roar and their huge proportions.

The menagerie is small, but select. It contains all the animals usually to be found in traveling collections. The circus begins 20 feet from the outside walls of the building. That is, a corridor 12 feet wide extends completely around the building, and is made attractive by the cages of wild animals, while the circus in the body of the hall

contains seats for 3,000 people. There are two rings and a central stage, and a program of 16 numbers was presented yesterday, many of them keeping the two rings and the stage full of interest at the same time.

"Mr. Robbins promises frequent changes of program. The show is to be permanent, with regular afternoon and evening performances.—*New York Times*, December 25."

All of the advance preparations for the Manhattan date of July 23 came to naught, as explained in the *Nationalist*, July 26.

"The circus came Tuesday, and with it came also a heavy rainstorm. The managers said they had been in the rain two weeks. The circus was unloaded from the cars, but only the side show tent was put up. The rain kept people out of town, and

we doubt if the side show got paid for its trouble."

The Manhattan *Mercury* confirmed the blown date and added, "Their train consists of sixteen cars, and hauling it costs about \$135 a day, or for each haul."

In another column the *Mercury* added, "The Robbins show carried a saloon car for safety against snake bites."

"Geo. Skelding, press agent for Frank Robbins great show, was side-tracked with his palace car, yesterday," according to the *Kansas Reporter*, Wamego, July 12, "and bulletin boards are flashing with animals, acrobats and the impaled Egyptian Empress. This great railroad show will visit Wamego, July 24th."

The *Reporter* made no mention of gambling and neither did the *Weekly Wamegan*. The *Reporter* spoke favorably of the aggregation.

"Although the rains had made the roads in a fearful shape, there were a great many people in town—perhaps 1,500 being under the afternoon canvas. The forenoon parade was creditable, and many features of the ring were new and highly sensational. The 'wild-west' portion was especially so. The slack-wire and a few of the vaulting feats were more than ordinary. Mr. F. C. Gayler, the press agent lends much to the popularity of the affair, by his courtesies. The company travel by rail, having seventeen cars of their own."

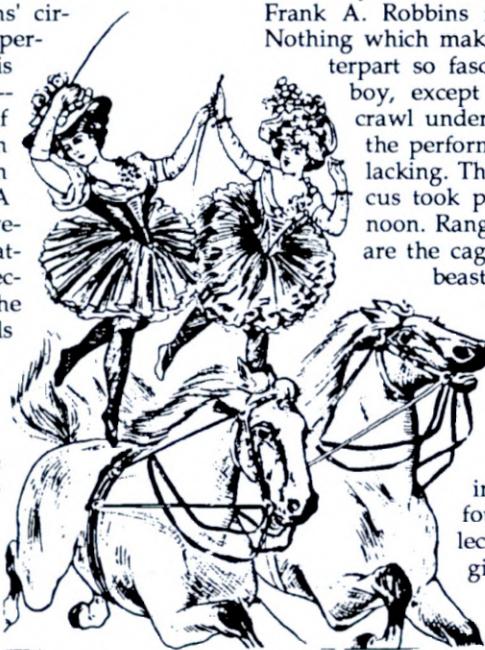
Mr. Gayler's popularity was multiplied by paying the advertising.

The *Wamegan*, following circus day, commented that, "Considering the unpromising weather, there was a large attendance at the circus. In the afternoon all of the seats, except a portion of the reserved seats, were occupied."

"While unloading at the depot one of the large circus wagons was upset from the car. The wagon was but slightly damaged."

Advertising in the Junction City *Union* for the exhibitions of July 25 was more specific than the ads used for previous dates. Mentioned were, "A herd of 20 elephants, including the marvelous \$125,000 BAND OF ELEPHANT MUSICIANS Actually Playing Popular Airs with Human-like Skill, and the Wonderfully Trained QUADRILLE ELEPHANTS! Forming the sets and tripping 'the light fantastic toe' with the grace of an ordinary ball-room miss.

Animals From All Regions of
Extreme Rarity and Value!
Birds of all kinds of brilliant plumage—
Of interest to
Ornithological Students,
and the delight of Ladies and Children,
Reptiles of All Descriptions
An Aquarium Filled with
Deep Sea Phenomena!



--A Museum of--
Freaks, Oddities, Inventions,
Circassians, Giants, Dwarfs,
Skeletons, Magicians
Fat Men and Women,
Ventriloquists, etc.,
and a Whole Family of
CLAY EATERS FROM
THE EVERGLADES!

Forming the most marvelous, magnificent and interesting consolidation of attractions the World has ever seen."

Imagine, a 16 car show with 20 elephants! Unbelievable!

Previously unannounced attractions were advertised in the Salina *Daily Republican* for the exhibitions of July 26:

"150 Mounted Participants 150
In Startling and Thrilling Feats
10 Western Horsewomen! 10

Wonderfully Experts in Marksmanship
with Fire-Arms and in the Saddle.

Genuine Cowboys! Genuine Indians!
Squaws, Maidens and Pappooses
Mexican Vaqueros, Caballeros, Trappers,
Hunters, Scouts and Rangers

In mimic rendition of
actual occurrences on the Western
Frontier. War Dances. Surprising
exhibitions of skill with the Lariat.

Wild Mustangs! Bucking Bronchos!
Caught with the Lasso.

The marvelous performance of
The Virginia Reel on Horseback!
By the Entire Company.

Classic Roman Hippodrome Sports
Gladitorial Feats and Chariot Races.
Headed by the Champion Bareback
Rider of the World

Charles W. Fish
Noted Equestrian
Expert Bicyclists

Famed Rquestrinnes
Marvelous Gymnasts
Skillful Jugglers
Comical Clowns
Amazing Acrobats
Daring Trapezists

Satsuma's Royal Japanese Troupe
Voltigeurs, Leapers, Tumblers,
Skatorial Phenomenons
\$20,000 Worth of Elephants."

There were widely divergent opinions concerning the quality of the show.

"The Saline *Daily Republican* reported that, "Most everybody attended the circus. And, most everybody was disappointed. It was a sort of one-horse affair. One ring, not enough seats, and an abundance of side shows. The one effort of the managers seemed to be to get as much money as possible with as little effort at entertaining as could be managed."

The Salina *Daily Republican* reported that, "The Frank A. Robbins show was here yesterday and had a large attendance. The show was a good one and the people attending were pleased. Mr.

John Wilson, the accommodating press agent, won the hearts of the press gang by his manly treatment of the boys."

The Hays City *Sentinel* had much to say about the Robbins show following the exhibitions of July 27.

"They called that show the 'winter circus' because it would be a cold day when you found a worse one.

"The circus tent was crowded both morning and evening by people who have since been kicking themselves.

"George Grass sold the circus folks a Texas pony which can buck the everlasting daylights out of the dish washer who parades himself as 'Broncho Bill.'

"One of the circus employees, by name Frank McGuire, was mauled about the

Robbins' show arrived in Russell on Sunday, July 28, and by nightfall the town was ready for murder. The *Russell Journal* carried the story on July 31.

"Sunday evening this community was thrown into a state of excitement by the report that a man connected with the circus had attempted to rape a young girl living in Russell. The man was identified and placed under arrest, and talk of lynching was quite common. On Monday he was tried for assault and battery with attempt to commit rape. As the charge of assault and battery was all that could be proven against him, he was fined \$250. As he had no money he was remanded to jail and will have to remain there until he is turned loose by the commissioners. If he was attempting to injure the girl, lynching would have been none too good for him, but from the evidence brought out at the trial the fine was heavy enough."

The exhibitions of July 29 at Russell "had some good features," according to the *Journal*, "but they were more than offset by the poor ones, and the failure to fulfill the promises and inducements held out. The concert was a regular steal as the performance did not come off as stated."

The *Ellsworth Reporter* on August 1 gave its opinion of the exhibitions of July 30.

"The show has gone, and it would of been better for some of our citizens if it had never come, some features of the show was good, but the gambling was so open and the gamblers so persistent and energetic in plying their vocation that they obscured all that was good about the concern, and in

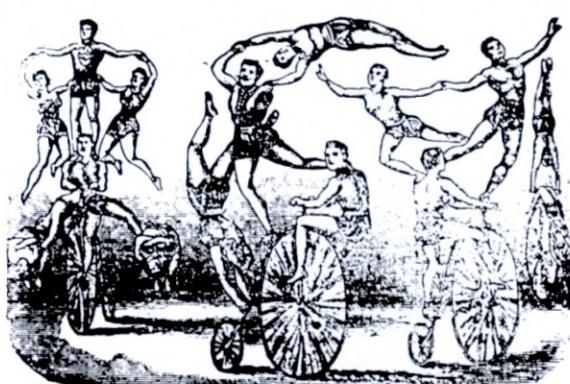
our judgment, it is one of the vilest shows that ever came to this section of the country."

Gambling was rampant at Solomon on August 1, but swindling proved the big winner as the *Solomon Sentinel* related August 7: "Swindled. John Taylor is one of our innocent, unassuming grangers, that takes in, as gospel, all that seems possibly truthful, when a glib tongue propels it out, in his hearing.

"Last Thursday John came to town early in the morning, so that he might gaze upon the ponderous elephants and enjoy the antics of the clowns and the Jerusalem ponies at Robbins' circus.

"He was approached by one of those soft-of-speech young men, who pumped him in short order, and thus found out

FRANK A. ROBBINS'
Gigantic and Sensationally Realistic
Wild West Hippodrome, Circus, Menagerie
Museum, Aviary and Aquarium.
A Colossal Confederation of Famous Features
—FROM THE—
American Institute, New York City.
Will Exhibit At



HIAWATHA, MONDAY, AUGUST 5.

Robbins ad in the July 26, 1889 *Brown County World*. Kansas State Historical Society.

head by a fellow canvasman on Saturday morning. The weapon used was a coupling pin. McGuire presented the appearance of a beef steak which had been operated on for hamburger.

"It is a shame and a pity that people should be bilked by an outfit such as Frank Robbins' circus. It was a combination which would galvanize a brass monkey into the vehement remark of, 'Rotton!' [sic] 'Rotton!' 'Rotton!' If anything was presented as advertised the audience failed to recognize it. The best way to dismiss the subject is to say that the whole business was a fraud."

that he was a man of means and then baited an alluring trap. Although Mr. Taylor's stories have varied somewhat, yet the following is the most feasible one, and to which he has held the longest.

"He went into circus and side show tents and was given to understand that he could be appointed agent for the outfit, with a big salary, if he would put up the currency to show that he was a responsible individual.

"The prospect of receiving a big salary incited the cupidity of our farmer, and he goes to the 'Citizens' State Bank, and draws therefrom \$1,100 in bank notes and a draft on Kansas City for \$125.

"Having got the money he goes back to the oily-tongued rascal, and in the presence of several of the showmen, or of men who follow Robbins' circus around the country, he handed out his roll of bills to be counted, and the thief immediately raised the wall of the tent, and stepped outside to count his hand, while the fellows around threatened to burnish the old man's head if he made a noise.

"Sometime afterward, he went and reported the robbery, but had become considerably confused, for he could neither point out the thief, his confederates, nor succinctly tell the place where this swindle was perpetrated.

"Marshal J. M. Ewing and assistant cashier C. H. Pattison, of the Citizens' State Bank, done all they possibly could, with the vague information at their command, to find the men, but without result.

"Sheriff D. W. Naill and his assistant, George Hoisington of Abilene, were indefatigable in their efforts, during afternoon and evening, to obtain a clue.

"We understand that Robbins offered to pay over to Sheriff Naill \$250, and finally \$300, to escape the odium which would attach to his show, and as he said, to assist the old man out of his difficulty. But he struck the wrong man, when he offered money, as a compromise sop, to Dave Naill.

"If the loser had only been able or willing to give the necessary bonds, the whole outfit might have been attached and Mr. Robbins given a chance to explain why he permits confidence men and thieves to travel around the country with him, and whether he may not be classed as an accomplice, because of his remissness.

"Within and about the tents the 'shell game' was played, and a number of our citizens and neighbors kindly contributed sums varying in amount from \$5 to \$25 in supporting lazy rascals, who travel about to fleece the unsophisticated. Some young men contributed a month's earnings to gratify a momentary excitement. Several married men also fell into the alluring trap, and a few hundreds of hard-earned,

hard-to-spare dollars, were taken away from our town, to be spent in riotous living in some eastern city."

Advertising once again featured the names of Charles W. Fish and Satsuma's Royal Japanese Troupe. The total absence of any supporting evidence concerning the actual performances leads one to believe that Fish and Satsuma were merely another fraud among many.

The Beloit *Gazette* commented that, "The audiences, both afternoon and evening [August 3] were very light—the smallest we have ever seen at a circus in Kansas. No gambling games were licensed, and no trouble was had."

The route of the Robbins show through Kansas was: July 19, Marysville; July 20, Beatrice, Nebraska; July 22, Blue Rapids; July 23, Manhattan; July 24, Wamego; July 25, Junction City; July 26, Salina; July 27, Hays City; July 29, Russell; July 30, Ellsworth; July 31, Lincoln Center; August 1, Solomon; August 2, Minneapolis; August 3, Beloit; August 5, Hiawatha; August 6, Clay Center; August 7, Belleville and August 8, Concordia.

Forepaugh and the Wild West was big in 1889, but was it really "3 Times the Biggest Show On Earth?" Bombast is expected in all circus advertisements and handouts to an extent that would be embarrassing in any other field of endeavor, but Forepaugh in 1889 brazenly abused the privilege. At the top of his advertisements in the Kansas press was the following: "1,400 Men and Horses! 3 Great Railway Trains! 200 Savings! 1,000 Wild Beasts! Acres and Acres of Cloud Towering Canvas! Seating Capacity for an Entire County! Tremendous Outpouring of the Public Everywhere! All Lines of Travel Crowded! Schools Dismissed! Stores Closed! Mills Shut Down! All Business Suspended! A General Holiday Everywhere! Six Million Dollars Invested! Daily Expenses a Fortune!"

Featured was the "Paris Hippodrome with all its charming, dashing and French female cherioteers, riders and drivers."

Custer died twice a day at the hands of "200 Genuine Sioux Indians 200," with Dr. W. F. Carver as the martyr of the Little Big Horn.

Among the "1,000 Wild Beasts and beautiful birds" were "Thirty Trained Elephants."

The most unusual animal advertised was "Eclipse The Trapeze Horse! A reason-gifted animal that fearlessly, faultlessly and grandly leaps from swing to swing, 20 feet in mid-air—the most phenomenal exhibition of equine sagacity and intrepidity the world has ever seen."

Not far behind was "Blondin, the Tight Rope Walking Horse!"

Could Eclipse hang by his heels? Did Blondin use a balancing pole?

Regardless of the fantasies aroused by the ads—and the press corps stretched the truth to the utmost—it is unfair to belittle the truly astonishing feats of Eclipse and Blondin.

Although the show was larger than ever before, "The Most Magnificent and Stupendous Amusement Combination the World Has Ever Seen," admission generously remained at "50 cents; children under nine, 25 cents."

A handout in the Leavenworth *Evening Standard* of August 27 told the public what to expect in the "Big Holiday Parade."

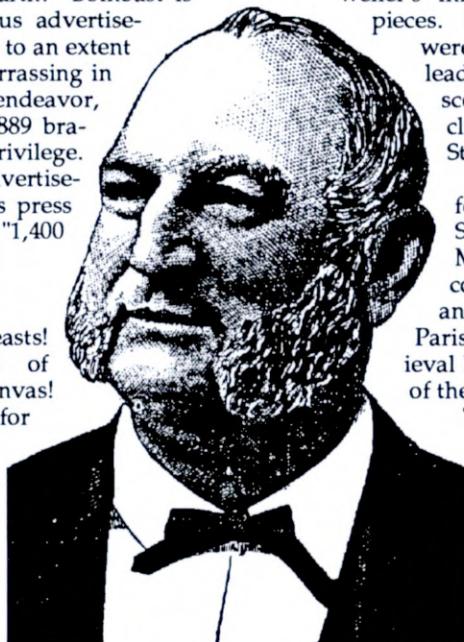
Leading the procession was Prof. Ganweiler's military band of thirty pieces. In the first section were caged animals and lead stock, plus "half a score" of tableau cars including "Neptune and St. George."

The second section featured Prof. W. S. Stokes' San Francisco Military band accompanied by the riders and charioteers of the Paris Hippodrome, medieval knights and Crusaders of the Middle Ages.

The third section, the Great National Wild West Exhibition, was led by Bugle Bill's Cowboy Brass band. "Big Tom" Reynolds and the old Deadwood stage coach; Chief Lone Feather and 20 braves of the Ogallala Sioux; Dr. Carver and Pawnee Bill; soldiers, scouts, cowboys, and vaqueros, "a hundred or more."

The fourth section presented Adam Forepaugh, Jr., and his gifted animal actors; "Mardi Gras sensations, special features, including Cleopatra's journey to meet Marc Antony, and Lalla Rookh's departure from Delhi."

Bringing up the rear were "Hundreds of Handsome Horses, brass bands galore,



Adam Forepaugh

Ogallala Sioux; Dr. Carver and Pawnee Bill; soldiers, scouts, cowboys, and vaqueros, "a hundred or more."

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Bringing up the rear were "Hundreds of Handsome Horses, brass bands galore,

richly robed processionists, thirty ponderous elephants, museum wonders, etc."

The show arrived in Leavenworth about 9:00 a. m., coming from Nebraska City, Nebraska, over the Missouri Pacific. The late arrival was due to several hot boxes, causing the parade to appear after 12 o'clock.

Large crowds attended both performances. The police had little to do despite the report in the *Standard* that, "Several young men who 'thought they could find it' at the 'thimblerig' on the circus grounds yesterday have less money to-day than they had then."

The *Standard* complimented Forepaugh, declaring, "Over 600 men and not a disorderly character among them. A model circus truly."

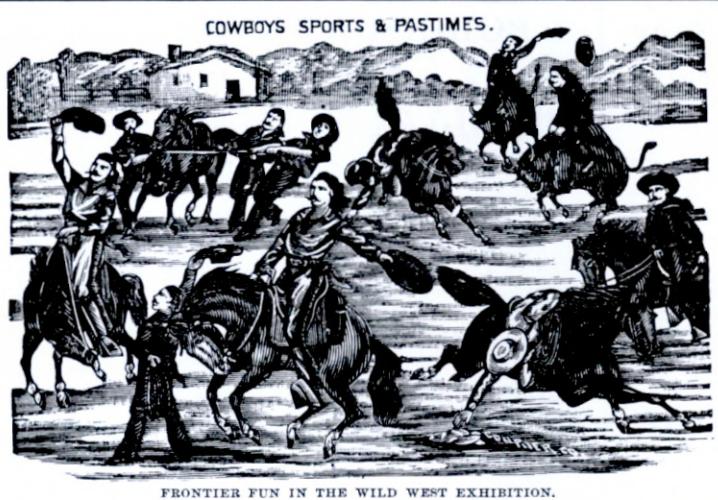
The only unscheduled excitement, according to the *Standard*, was, "A fractious team tried to run away with a circus wagon on north Fifth street last night while the caravansary was being removed from the reservation (Ft. Leavenworth) to the Missouri Pacific yards, and demolished a vapor light and post near the Morris school."

The show, for an unknown reason, was late in arriving in Topeka for the exhibitions of August 29. The *Topeka State Journal* reported that the show moved on forty-three cars and ran in three sections.

The *Kansas Democrat*, Topeka, disagreed with the *Journal* report, stating that, "The great Forepaugh circus and menagerie arrived in this city this morning between 7 and 8 o'clock, via the Santa Fe from Leavenworth. The train consisted of sixty heavily loaded cars, divided into four sections.

The parade was preceded by a battalion of cavalry in uniform, guarding the overland stage. Then followed Indians, prairie schooners, bands in uniform and an endless array of chariots, cages, Cleopatra's barge, elephants, magnificent horses, open cages of lions, tigers, kangaroos, bears, birds, etc., clowns in costume, and an infinite variety of everything that could delight the eye and ear and excite the admiring wonderment of the densely packed populace of the streets. Outriders marched ahead of and alongside the procession cautioning people to be on the lookout for their horses and to keep the delighted young American from crowding too close.

"The parade passed off without ac-



This drawing appeared in the 1889 Forepaugh courier and newspaper ads. Pfening Archives.

ident, and was completed about 12:30 o'clock when it returned to Forepaugh City to arrange for the grand exhibition this afternoon and evening."

"Forepaugh City" was located at Thirteenth and Harrison Streets.

The *Journal* estimated the crowd watching the parade on Kansas avenue at 20,000.

A full page was devoted to Dr. Carver in the 1889 Forepaugh courier. Pfening Archives.

Dr. WM. F. CARVER,
CHAMPION SHOT OF THE WORLD.



APPEARS AT EVERY EXHIBITION OF THE COMBINED WILD WEST AND GREAT FOREPAUGH SHOWS.
The Wizard Rifeman of the West, known among the Sioux as "THE EVIL SPIRIT OF THE PLAINS!" Champion All-Round Shot of the Universe! Conqueror of all America and Europe! The Pride of Columbia! Cynosure of the Admiration of People, Princes, Warriors, and Kings!

The *Democrat*, following circus day, reported that, "This year the realistic Wild West feature is one of the leading novelties and the exposition equals, if it does not surpass, Buffalo Bill's exhibition. The flying trapeze performances of the Eugenes, the flying leaps of 'Eclipse,' the equine gymnast, and the rope walking of 'Blondin' were wonderful; and the dancing elephants brought forth a storm of applause. The show from first to last was first-class and every one of the 20,000 people who witnessed it, during the afternoon and evening exhibitions, was more than pleased."

The *Topeka Daily Capital* praised the Wild West contingent and mentioned a few favorite circus acts.

"Another feature of genuine worth was the trapeze performances which were unusually good, while the remarkable fruits of Adam Forepaugh, Jr.'s training of the elephants and his plank-walking horse, Blondin, were worthy of special praise.

"The crowd at the afternoon performance numbered fully 10,000 people and the evening exhibition was great by nearly as many.

"The police protection at the circus yesterday afternoon and evening," according to the *Journal*, "was splendid, and entitles the 'Mets' to considerable praise. An ample force was present, both outside and inside the tents, and it was not necessary to make any arrests and no one complained of pick pockets or drunken men. At the main entrance two policemen were present all the time and no visibly drunken men were allowed to enter. Sergeants Simonton and O'Rourke stood at the ticket wagon, and equal precaution was taken at other places where the jam was especially great."

A story in the *Wichita Daily Eagle* covering circus day on August 31 stated there were sixty cars with twenty cars in a train.

The story, quoted in part, below, provided other pertinent information.

"The show represents an investment of \$1,500,000, and its expenses are \$25,000 a week, exclusive of \$85,000 paid for the seasons stock of lithographs and posters. Salaries of the 681 employees range from \$6 for canvas men to \$350 a week for aerial performers and riders, ordinary tumblers receiving \$25 a week. Thursday is pay-day for the performers, and Saturday for the 123 canvas men whom 'Big Meed' bosses.

Two Pinkerton detectives are employed to watch for crooks. The tent is 385 feet long and 185 feet wide, and seats 13,500 people. The ordinary receipts are \$2,000 to \$4,600 for each performance, and occasionally they reach \$8,000 to \$10,000.

"The announcer, Mr. Frank Morris, an old time showman, had no difficulty in making himself heard by everyone and could bring in the dime concert in a very 'smooth' way.

The press agent, Mr. J. E. Boyle, is quite courteous and attentive to his work and makes it a point to give all information in clever answers.

"The entertainment last night was witnessed by an immense crowd, seemingly larger than that at the afternoon."

September 3, circus day in Independence, was described by the *Star and Kansan* as follows: "Last Tuesday--show day--was a holy terror. With the early morning our streets began to be thronged and by nine o'clock the street sprinkler found itself crowded out and succumbed. From that time on the wind and dust held high carnival in our streets for the first time this year, and we had old-fashioned Kansas weather, the dust some of the time being so thick that it was difficult to distinguish objects across the street. For dust, dirt and general disagreeableness the day was one long to be remembered."

The *Star and Kansan* estimated the matinee crowd from 6,000 to 8,000.

The C. K. W. Railway advertised a round trip fare of 64 cents from Havana to Independence, 16 miles apart, "Good for return September 4th."

Forepaugh and the Wild West in 1889 played the following Kansas towns: August 28, Leavenworth; August 29, Topeka; August 30, Emporia; August 31, Wichita; September 2, Winfield; September 3, Independence; September 4, Ft. Scott.

It was, of course, unknown at the time, but 1889 was Adam Forepaugh's last appearance in Kansas. On January 23, 1890, the Topeka *State Journal* relayed the sad announcement from Philadelphia that, "Adam Forepaugh, the veteran circus manager, died late last night (January 22) at his residence in this city. Mr. Forepaugh had been ailing for some time past. He was attacked a week or two ago with the prevailing influenza epidemic, which three or four days ago developed into pneumonia.

Forepaugh was originally a butcher, but a great many years ago he embarked in the circus business, in which he was very successful, getting together a most extensive circus and menagerie with which he amassed a fortune which is estimated at more than one million dollars.

"Mr. Forepaugh was 68 years old. He

state, than probably any living American."

"It is reported that James T. Johnson will return to Arkansas City next month with his circus," according to the *Arkansas Valley Democrat* of February 22. "The *Democrat* would be pleased to see him, as he owes us \$8.00 and just now it would come in handy."

On March 16 the *New York Clipper* reported that, "Jas. T. Johnson and his circus company have left Monett, Missouri where they had been playing since last August. The citizens and newspapers of that town do not speak in very complimentary terms of Mr. Johnson and lay sundry serious charges at his door."

The *Democrat* never said whether or not Johnson paid his bill, but on March 15, the paper commented that, "Johnson, the circus man, says that he will have another circus in full blast in Arkansas City in about two weeks and that it will remain here through the entire summer."

Arkansas City in 1889 was crowded with people awaiting the opening of the Unassigned Lands in Oklahoma, about 2,000,000 acres. Prospective settlers were not allowed south of the Kansas border and thousands of hopefulls were camped as close to Oklahoma as the army would permit. A throng of 20,000 surrounded Arkansas City. The great race for a free homestead began at noon on April 22, but until the great day there was little to do around Arkansas City and any diversion was a welcome break from the boredom of waiting. Johnson had nearly a captive audience.

Johnson opened his show on April 5. A handout in the *Democrat* announced "many new and startling features will be introduced to the great delight of the spectators. The only and wonderful Gymnacue will make its appearance every night and send the buttons flying as of old. Secure your tickets at the ticket wagon and thus avoid the rush. General admission 15 cts. Reserved seats 25 cts; children 10 cts."

Johnson did not use any display advertising, but scattered through the papers were numerous one sentence proclamations such as the following taken from an Arkansas City paper with the strange name of *Fair Play*.

"Look out for the guy-ma-cue [sic] at Johnson's circus."

"Grand matinee at Johnson's circus for children on Saturday afternoon; admission 5 cents, adults 15 and 25 cents."

"Don't fail to see the great and double ascension on a single wire over the canvas at Johnson's circus on Saturday afternoon at one o'clock by Ella and Potter."

Fair Play considered the opening "A

ROBINSON & Co's Circus & Museum

Permanently located in
Arkansas City, Kan.

Performance every night except Sunday.

ROBINSON & CO, Proprietors. R. W. ROBINSON, Sole Manager.

PROF. FRANKLIN, the wonderful KING OF FIRE, Human Anvil and Human Pin Cushion.

LEW CULLINS, the Funniest of all Funny Clowns.

HARRY KELLY, in his great Indian Bareback Horsemanship.

JOE HOYT, the famous High Somersault Thrower and Border Gymnast.

JIMMY WOODS, the Boneless Contortionist.

KLIE, in the Flying Rings and other Specialties.

MISS PEARL WALLING, in her Pleasing Specialties.

SATAN, the wonderful Fire-King Horse.

KITTY, the greatest Monkey Bareback Rider of the age.

A TROUPE of Agile Acrobats. A Battalion of High Leapers and Tumblers.

A CONGRESS of Aerial Artists.

Beautiful TRAINED HORSES and PONIES.

THE MUSEUM

Is filled with Living Wonders.

THE GREAT AFRICAN SERPENT.

THE HUMAN PIN CUSHION, driven pins and needles deeply into all parts of his body.

THE FAIR SNAKE CHARMER and her writhing, hissing pet serpent.

THE EYELESS BAT, (must be seen to be appreciated.)

THE FUNNY MONKEYS, in their laugable actions.

THE SOUTH AMERICAN MACAW-PARROT.

THE AUSTRALIAN COCKATOO.

THE MAMMOTH BORDER OWL.

A COLONY OF PRAIRIE DOGS, and many other objects of rare interest.

Museum opens at 7 o'clock.
Circus " 8 "

Robinson & Co. ad in the June 14, 1889 Arkansas City *Fair Play*. Kansas State Historical Society.

leaves a wife and one son, Adam Jr., who will succeed to his immense circus property."

On January 30 the *Journal* had its last say on the dead showman.

"Adam Forepaugh, it is said, never smoked nor chewed tobacco nor drank intoxicating liquors. His success was due to thorough application to his business and to shrewd business methods. He was kind at heart--especially so to animals--rough in exterior, fond of a joke, haughty and brusque to his employes, except heads of departments, and he attended to the smallest detail himself. When all went well he used to go to his private car every night at 10 o'clock; at home this was his invariable hour of retiring. He always sat at the main entrance of the show, and his face was more familiar to the great mass of people, rich and poor, and in every

Marked Success," or at least Johnson's press agent considered it so.

"Mr. Jas. T. Johnson opened his circus last Saturday evening, and a crowded tent has greeted the enterprising manager at every performance. The secret of Mr. Johnson's success lies in the fact that he is well known here. Arkansas City owns him and he puts forth every effort to secure the very best features for his show and presents them at prices so low that all can attend. He gives a show equal in the genuine merit of any similar enterprise in the country.

"Among his leading features Mr. Johnson takes especial pride in his 'Fire King' horses, two beautiful steeds which began training on Monday and which now perform the most wonderful and daring feats. The great 'gymacue' still delights thousands, and his artistic tumblers, contortionists, tight wire artists, etc., etc., are second to none in the profession.

The show is a great one and is giving unbounded satisfaction to the large crowds which attend nightly. Open every evening at 6:30 on lot adjoining the St. Charles Hotel."

What was the "Gymacue"? No explanation is ever given.

Johnson varied his offerings. On April 11, according to the *Weekly Republican Traveler*, he presented "a rattling set to with gloves, between Red Willis, a local sport, and an unknown heavy weight from Boston. There will be some hard hitting, as the men are both in deep fighter. The match will take place in the ring during the performance this evening and the big tent will hardy accommodate the crowd that will certainly attend. In addition to this great exhibition, the already famous 'fire king' horses will appear in connection with the long programme of new and exciting features. The circus is open every evening at 7:30."

After the performance on April 17, the show experienced a blow-down. The only people in the tent were employees and fortunately no one was injured.

When the bugle sounded and the cannon roared on April 22, Johnson lost most of his audience to the race for Oklahoma homesteads.

The *Canal City Dispatch*, Arkansas City, reported on May 9 that, "J. T. Johnson was fined lightly for assaulting three boys in the circus, but the boys were not being satisfied with that, got out a state warrant and Johnson paid \$5 more in Fout's court."

On May 23, the *Dispatch* carried an interesting report stating that, "W. R. Robinson, one of the old stock of showmen, who lately came up from Texas, has bought Johnson's circus paraphernalia and says he will bring here a new mu-

seum and circus outfit that will surprise the natives. He received his bills of lading this morning and expects the property by freight about next Sunday."

The sale of the show may have been a coup for Johnson in view of the events that followed.

The *Democrat* on May 24 reported that, "Robinson & Co's., circus will open shortly with a fine circus and a well selected museum of freaks and wonders. This will be a standing show here for the summer season, and everybody is in-



vited to attend a moral show under the directions of Jas. T. Johnson, manager."

The Robinson show opened June 8 and according to the *Dispatch* "gave a good exhibition Saturday night. Franklin the fire-eater and Kelley the clown rider being the most interesting features. The circus is under fair way for prosperity now."

A two-column ad in *Fair Play* named R. W. Robinson as "Sole Manager" of Robinson & Co's Circus & Museum, "Permanently located in Arkansas City, Kan., Performance every night except Sunday."

There was no mention of James T. Johnson.

Robinson & Company played a short season in Arkansas City. *Fair Play* commented on June 28 that "We understand that Robinson & Cos., circus is laid up for repairs, for the present."

The *Weekly Republican Traveler* on June 27 announced that "Robinson & Co. sold their circus to Wichita parties who will continue it in this city." The buyers were not named and the show disappeared from the press.

James T. Johnson, who could have taught a thing or two to the Unsinkable Mollie Brown, did not disappear from the news.

"It is reported that J. T. Johnson will revive the circus on Saturday night (June 29)," according to *Fair Play*.

The *Daily Arkansas City Traveler* published the following review: "James T. Johnson's circus had a full house last

night, giving a good performance. It was patronized by a large lady audience. The second-sight lady appeared in the ring astonishing everyone present and sent them home wondering. The circus will show every night next week except on the 4th of July when it will visit Geuda Springs. The museum has been enlarged to quite an extent and is good."

The city council met on the night of July 15 and adopted by motion "that Johnson's circus was ordered to be closed up and declared a nuisance provided he refuses to pay his license tax; and the clerk was instructed to collect from him from the time he last paid license, at the rate of \$10 per month."

The *Traveler* presented Johnson's version of the closing on July 23. "Johnson's circus will close for a short time on account of the intense heat but will open again with a new company on the occasion of the annual gathering of United States troops at Chillico. The museum will be greatly enlarged."

Johnson had a huge python if a report of July 5 in the *Dispatch* is accurate. "Jim Johnson's big python is one of those fastidious snakes that only eat four times a year. Yesterday his appetite began to return and as a kind of relish he took in six hens and two gallons of milk. During the next few days he will finish his meal."

A milk drinking python is, indeed, a rarity.

"James T. Johnson & Co's. circus," according to the *Traveler*, September 12, "will open again in an entire new program. They will play here for a short time then go south for the winter months and return to Arkansas City to attach the large menagerie of wild animals and cages which will be built here during the winter for the road next spring. We understand that Dr. Gudgen is one of the principal movers in this concern, one of Johnson's high friends. Good luck to Jas. T. J*lt [sic]."

The *New York Clipper*, September 21, confirmed the *Traveler*. "WANTED IMMEDIATELY, to join James T. Johnson & Co's Circus, Going South by Rail. Riders, Leapers, Tumblers, Horizontal Bars, Trapeze, Lady Wire Walkers, outside and in; a Troupe of Good Performing Dogs, Monkeys and Goats, Concert People, Brass Band, Advance Agent, Boss Canvasman, Freaks, etc. Performers must do two turns, salary sure, but must be low. Show will leave Arkansas City, Kan., about Oct. 1. Address James T. Johnson & Co."

So once again James T. Johnson took to the road--The Yellow Brick Road to the Emerald City.

And "Goodbye, Dr. Gudgen."

Research funded in part by grants from Wolfe's Camera & Video, Topeka, Kansas.



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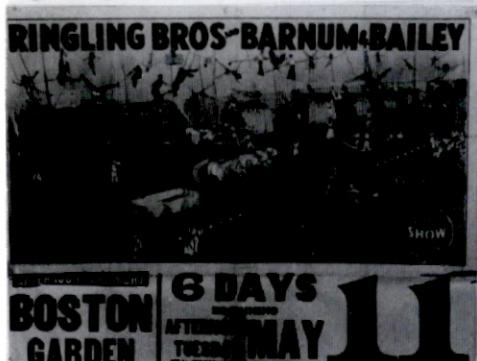
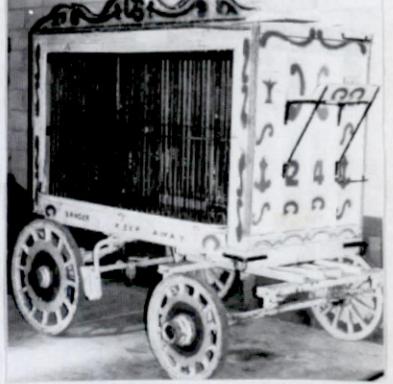
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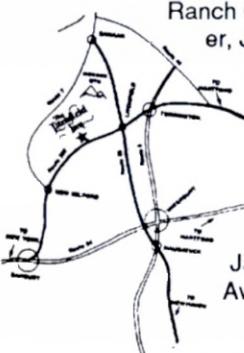
SHOW

SHOW

Many vintage posters: Ringling Bros. C-1896; Ringling-Barnum C-1920-50s; Hunt Bros. C-1940-50s; Shrine Circus C-1947; Russell Bros. C-1940s; Kelly-Miller C-1940-50s; Dailey Bros. C-1940s. Rare black & white C-1943; King Bros. C-1940-60s; Biller Bros. C-1940-50s; Cole Bros. C-1940-50s; Christy Bros. C-1925; Wallace Bros.-Cristiani, Wallace Bros. 1960s; Pollack Bros. C-1940s; Sells & Gray C-1950s and many more. 48 Foreign and European posters. CFA Convention photos 1930-1940. Vintage circus and rodeo magazines. Early route cards. Circus Pop-Up books; Signed illustrations by Ray Dirgo, Fred O. Seibel, E. Webster. Self portrait by Bozo Kelly. Paintings of Emmett Kelly, Emmett Kelly, Jr. and Paul Jung by Bill Day. Kelty photo of Miller Bros. 101 Ranch C-1921. Autographed 8 x 10" photos of Lou Jacobs, Hal Christy, Slivers Johnson, Laddie Lamont, Capt. Spiller, Joe Basil, Moran & Wiser, Barry Yengst, Daisey and many more photos. Route books C-1943-1967. Kemps Wild West Show, Buffalo Bill Wild West. Indian blanket given to Dexter Fellows by Navaho Chief. Original Terrell Jacobs cage wagon. And much more!!! Please plan to join us.

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